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Cooper's Works

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A cry from the interior prepared the latter for some fresh subject of horror, when Pierre and his companion quickly reappeared, dragging a living man into the open air.—*The Headsman.*

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NEW YORK:
P. F. COLLIER, PUBLISHER.
1891.

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WORKS

OF

J. FENIMORE COOPER

THE HEADSMAN.

LIONEL LINCOLN.

THE BRAVO.

HEIDENMAUER.

ILLUSTRATED WITH WOOD-ENGRAVINGS.

COMPLETE IN TEN VOLUMES.

VOLUME TEN.

NEW YORK:
P. F. COLLIER, PUBLISHER.
1891.

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THE HEADSMAN.

INTRODUCTION.

EARLY in October, 1832, a travelling-carriage stopped on the summit of that long descent where the road pitches from the elevated plain of Moudon, in Switzerland, to the level of the lake of Geneva, immediately above the little city of Vévey. The postilion had dismounted to chain a wheel, and the halt enabled those he conducted to catch a glimpse of the lovely scenery of that remarkable view.

The travellers were an American family, which had long been wandering about Europe, and which was now destined it knew not whither, having just traversed a thousand miles of Germany in its devious course. Four years before, the same family had halted on the same spot, nearly on the same day of the month of October, aud for precisely the same object. It was then journeying to Italy, and as its members hung over the view of the Leman, with its accessories of Chillon, Châtelard, Blonay, Meillerie, the peaks of Savoy, and the wild ranges of the Alps, they had felt regret that the fairy scene was so soon to pass away. The case was now different, and yielding to the charm of a nature so noble, and yet so soft, within a few hours the carriage was in remise, a house was taken, the baggage unpacked, and the household gods of the travellers were erected, for the twentieth time, in a strange land.

Our American (for the family had its head) was familiar with the ocean, and the sight of water awoke old and pleasant recollections. He was hardly established in Vévey as a housekeeper, before he sought a boat. Chance brought him to a certain Jean Descloux (we give the spelling at hazard), with whom he soon struck up a bargain, and they launched forth in company upon the lake.

This casual meeting was the commencement of an agreeable and friendly intercourse. Jean Descloux, besides being a very good boatman, was a respectable philosopher in his way; possessing a tolerable stock of general information. His knowledge of America, in particular, might be deemed a little remarkable. He knew it was a continent, which lay west of his own quarter of the world; that it had a place in it called New Vévey; that all the whites who had gone there were not yet black, and that there were plausible hopes it might one day be civilized. Finding Jean so enlightened on a subject under which most of the eastern savants break down, the American thought it well enough to prick him closely on other matters. The worthy boatman turned out to be a man of singularly just discrimination. He was a reasonably good judge of the weather; had divers marvels to relate concerning the doings of the lake; thought the city very wrong for not making a port in the great square; always maintained that the wine of Saint Saphorin was very savory drinking for those who could get no better; laughed at the idea of there being sufficient cordage in the world to reach to the bottom of the Genfer See; was of the opinion that the trout was a better fish than the féra; spoke with singular moderation of his ancient masters, the bourgeoisie of Berne, which, however, he always affirmed kept singularly bad roads in Vaud, while those around its own city were the best in Europe, and otherwise showed himself to be a discreet and observant man. In short, honest Jean Descloux was a fair sample of that home-bred, upright common sense, which seems to form the instinct of the mass, and which it is greatly the fashion to deride in those circles in which mystification passes for profound

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thinking, bold assumption for evidence, a simper for wit, particular personal advantages for liberty, and in which it is deemed a mortal offence against good manners to hint that Adam and Eve were the common parents of mankind.

"Monsieur has chosen a good time to visit Vévey," observed Jean Descloux, one evening that they were drifting in front of the town, the whole scenery resembling a fairy picture rather than a portion of this much-abused earth; "it blows sometimes at this end of the lake in a way to frighten the gulls out of it. We shall see no more of the steamboat after the last of the month."

The American cast a glance at the mountain, drew upon his memory for sundry squalls and gales which he had seen himself, and thought the boatman's figure of speech less extravagant than it had at first seemed.

"If your lake craft were better constructed, they would make better weather," he quietly observed.

Monsieur Descloux had no wish to quarrel with a customer who employed him every evening, and who preferred floating with the current to being rowed with a crooked oar. He manifested his prudence, therefore, by making a reserved reply.

"No doubt, monsieur," he said, "that the people who live on the sea make better vessels, and know how to sail them more skilfully. We had a proof of that here at Vévey" (he pronounced the word like v-*vais*, agreeably to the sounds of the French vowels), "last summer, which you might like to hear. An English gentleman—they say he was a captain in the marine—had a vessel built at Nice, and dragged over the mountains to our lake. He took a run across to Meillerie one fine morning, and no duck ever skimmed along lighter or swifter! He was not a man to take advice from a Swiss boatman, for he had crossed the line and seen waterspouts and whales! Well, he was on his way back in the dark, and it came on to blow here from off the mountains, and he stood on boldly toward our shore, heaving the lead as he drew near the land, as if he had been beating into Spithead in a fog,"—Jean chuckled at the idea of sounding in the Leman—"while he flew along like a bold mariner, as no doubt he was!"

"Landing, I suppose," said the American, "among the lumber in the great square?"

"Monsieur is mistaken. He broke his boat's nose against that wall; and the next day, a piece of her, big enough to make a thole-pin, was not to be found. He might as well have sounded the heavens!"

"The lake has a bottom, notwithstanding?"

"Your pardon, monsieur. The lake has no bottom. The sea may have a bottom, but we have no bottom here."

There was little use in disputing the point.

Monsieur Descloux then spoke of the revolutions he had seen. He remembered the time when Vaud was a province of Berne. His observations on this subject were rational, and were well seasoned with common sense. His doctrine was simply this: "If one man rule, he will rule for his own benefit and that of his parasites; if a minority rule, we have many masters instead of one" (honest Jean had got hold here of a cant saying of the privileged, which he very ingeniously converted against themselves), "all of whom must be fed and served; and if the majority rule, and rule wrongfully, why, the minimum of harm is done." He admitted that the people might be deceived to their own injury, but then he did not think it was quite as likely to happen, as that they should be oppressed when they were governed without any agency of their own. On these points the American and the Vaudois were absolutely of the same mind.

From politics the transition to poetry was natural, for a common ingredient in both would seem to be fiction. On the subject of his mountains, Monsieur Descloux was a thorough Swiss. He expatiated on their grandeur, their storms, their height, and their glaciers, with eloquence. The worthy boatman had some such opinions of the superiority of his own country as all are apt to form who have never seen any other. He dwelt on the glories of an Abbaye des Vignerons, too, with the gusto of a Vévaisan, and seemed to think it would be a high stroke of state policy, to get up a new *fête* of this kind as speedily as possible. In short, the world and its interests were pretty generally discussed between these two philosophers during an intercourse that extended to a month.

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Our American was not a man to let instruction of this nature easily escape him. He lay hours at a time on the seats of Jean Descloux's boat, looking up at the mountains, or watching some lazy sail on the lake, and speculating on the wisdom of which he was so accidentally made the repository. His view on one side was limited by the glacier of Mount Vélan, a near neighbor of the celebrated col of St. Bernard; and on the other, his eye could range to the smiling fields that surround Geneva. Within this setting is contained one of the most magnificent pictures that Nature ever drew, and he bethought him of the human actions, passions, and interests, of which it might have been the scene. By a connection that was natural enough to the situation, he imagined a fragment of life passed between these grand limits, and the manner in which men could listen to the never-wearied promptings of their impulses in the immediate presence of the majesty of the Creator. He bethought him of the analogies that exist between inanimate nature and our own wayward inequalities; of the fearful admixture of good and evil of which we are composed; of the manner in which the best betray their submission to the devils, and in which the worst have gleams of that eternal principle of right, by which they have been endowed by God; of those tempests which sometimes lie dormant in our systems, like the slumbering lake in the calm, but which excited, equal its fury when lashed by the winds; of the strength of prejudices; of the worthlessness and changeable character of the most cherished of our opinions, and of that strange, incomprehensible, and yet winning *mélange* of contradictions, of fallacies, of truths, and of wrongs, which make up the sum of our existence.

The following pages are the result of this dreaming. The reader is left to his own intelligence for the moral.

A respectable English writer observed: "All pages of human life are worth reading; the wise instruct; the gay divert us; the imprudent teach us what to shun; the absurd cure the spleen."

CHAPTER I.

"Day glimmered and I went, a gentle breeze
Ruffling the Leman lake."—ROGERS.

THE year was in its fall, according to a poetical expression of our own, and the morning bright, as the fairest and swiftest bark that navigated the Leman lay at the quay of the ancient and historical town of Geneva, ready to depart for the country of Vaud. This vessel was called the Winkelried, in commemoration of Arnold of that name, who had so generously sacrified life and hopes to the good of his country, and who deservedly ranks among the truest of those heroes of whom we have well-authenticated legends. She had been launched at the commencement of the summer, and still bore at the fore-top-mast-head a bunch of evergreens, profusely ornamented with knots and streamers of ribbon, the offerings of the patron's female friends, and the fancied gage of success. The use of steam, and the presence of unemployed seamen of various nations, in this idle season of the warlike, are slowly leading to innovations and improvements in the navigation of the lakes of Italy and Switzerland, it is true; but time, even at this hour, has done little toward changing the habits and opinions of those who ply on these inland waters for a subsistence. The Winkelried had the two low diverging masts; the attenuated and picturesquely poised latine yards; the light triangular sails; the sweeping and projecting gangways; the receding and falling stern; the high and peaked prow, with, in general, the classical and quaint air of those vessels that are seen in the older paintings and engravings. A gilded ball glittered on the summit of each mast, for no canvas was set higher than the slender and well-balanced yards, and it was above one of these that the wilted bush, with its gay appendages, trembled and fluttered in a fresh western wind. The hull was worthy of so much goodly apparel, being spacious, commodious, and, according to the wants of the navigation, of approved mould. The freight, which was sufficiently obvious, much the greatest part being piled on the ample deck, consisted of what our own watermen would term an assorted cargo. It was, however, chiefly composed of those foreign luxuries, as they were

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then called, though use has now rendered them nearly indispensable to domestic economy, which were consumed, in singular moderation, by the more affluent of those who dwelt deeper among the mountains, and of the two principal products of the dairy; the latter being destined to a market in the less verdant countries of the south. To these must be added the personal effects of an unusual number of passengers, which were stowed on the top of the heavier part of the cargo, with an order and care that their value would scarcely seem to require. The arrangement, however, was necessary to the convenience, and even to the security of the bark, having been made by the patron with a view to posting each individual by his particular wallet, in a manner to prevent confusion in the crowd, and to leave the crew space and opportunity to discharge the necessary duties of the navigation.

With a vessel stowed, sails ready to drop, the wind fair, and the day drawing on apace, the patron of the Winkelried, who was also her owner, felt a very natural wish to depart. But an unlooked-for obstacle had just presented itself at the water-gate, where the officer charged with the duty of looking into the characters of all who went and came was posted, and around whom some fifty representatives of half as many nations were now clustered in a clamorous throng, filling the air with a confusion of tongues that had some probable affinity to the noises which deranged the workmen of Babel. It appeared, by parts of sentences and broken remonstrances, equally addressed to the patron, whose name was Baptiste, and to the guardian of the Genevese laws, a rumor was rife among these truculent travellers, that Balthazar, the headsman, or executioner, of the powerful and aristocratical canton of Berne, was about to be smuggled into their company by the cupidity of the former, contrary, not only to what was due to the feelings and rights of men of more creditable callings, but, as it was vehemently and plausibly insisted, to the very safety of those who were about to trust their fortunes to the vicissitudes of the elements.

Chance and the ingenuity of Baptiste had collected, on this occasion, as party-colored and heterogeneous an assemblage of human passions, interests, dialects, wishes, and opinions, as any admirer of diversity of character could desire. There were several small traders, some returning from adventures in Germany and France, and some bound southward, with their scanty stock of wares; a few poor scholars, bent on a literary pilgrimage to Rome; an artist or two, better provided with enthusiasm than with either knowledge or taste, journeying with poetical longings towards skies and tints of Italy; a *troupe* of street jugglers, who had been turning their Neapolitan buffoonery to account among the duller and less sophisticated inhabitants of Swabia; divers lackeys out of place; some six or eight capitalists who lived on their wits, and a nameless herd of that set which the French call "bad subjects;" a title that is just now, oddly enough, disputed between the dregs of society and a class that would fain become its exclusive leaders and lords.

These, with some slight qualifications that it is not yet necessary to particularize, composed that essential requisite of all fair representation—the majority. Those who remained were of a different caste. Near the noisy crowd of tossing heads and brandished arms, in and around the gate, was a party containing the venerable and still fine figure of a man in the travelling dress of one of superior condition, and who did not need the testimony of the two or three liveried menials that stood near his person, to give an assurance of his belonging to the more fortunate of his fellow creatures, as good and evil are usually estimated in calculating the chances of life. On his arm leaned a female, so young, and yet so lovely, as to cause regret in all who observed her fading color, the sweet but melancholy smile that occasionally lighted her mild and pleasing features, at some of the more marked exuberances of folly among the crowd, and a form which, notwithstanding her lessened bloom, was nearly perfect. If these symptoms of delicate health did not prevent this fair girl from being amused at the volubility and arguments of the different orators, she oftener manifested apprehension at finding herself the companion of creatures so untrained, so violent, so exacting, and so grossly ignorant. A young man, wearing the roquelaure and other similar appendages of a Swiss in for-

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eign military service, a character to excite neither observation nor comment in that age, stood at her elbow, answering the questions that from time to time were addressed to him by the others, in a manner to show he was an intimate acquaintance, though there were signs about his travelling equipage to prove he was not exactly of their ordinary society. Of all who were not immediately engaged in the boisterous discussion at the gate, this young soldier, who was commonly addressed by those near him as Monsieur Sigismund, was much the most interested in its progress. Though of herculean frame, and evidently of unusual physical force, he was singularly agitated. His cheek, which had not yet lost the freshness due to the mountain air, would, at times, become pale as that of the wilting flower near him; while at others, the blood rushed across his brow in a torrent that seemed to threaten a rupture of the starting vessels in which it so tumultuously flowed. Unless addressed, however, he said nothing; his distress gradually subsiding, until it was merely betrayed by the convulsive writhings of his fingers, which unconsciously grasped the hilt of his sword.

The uproar had now continued for some time; throats were getting sore, tongues clammy, voices hoarse, and words incoherent, when a sudden check was given to the useless clamor by an incident quite in unison with the disturbance itself. Two enormous dogs were in attendance hard by, apparently awaiting the movements of their respective masters, who were lost to view in the mass of heads and bodies that stopped the passage of the gate. One of these animals was covered with a short, thick coating of hair, whose prevailing color was a dingy yellow, but whose throat and legs, with most of the inferior parts of the body, were of a dull white. Nature, on the other hand, had given a dusky, brownish, shaggy dress to his rival, though his general hue was relieved by a few shades of a more decided black. As respects weight and force of body, the difference between the brutes was not very obvious, though perhaps it slightly inclined in favor of the former, who in length, if not in strength, of limb, however, had more manifestly the advantage.

It would much exceed the intelligence we have brought to this task to explain how far the instincts of the dogs sympathized in the savage passions of the human beings around them, or whether they were conscious that their masters had espoused opposite sides in the quarrel, and that it became them, as faithful esquires, to tilt together by way of supporting the honor of those they followed; but, after measuring each other for the usual period with the eye, they came violently together, body to body, in the manner of their species. The collision was fearful, and the struggle, being between two creatures of so great size and strength, of the fiercest kind. The roar resembled that of lions, effectually drowning the clamor of human voices. Every tongue was mute, and each head was turned in the direction of the combatants. The trembling girl recoiled with averted face, while the young man stepped eagerly forward to protect her, for the conflict was near the place they occupied; but powerful and active as was his frame, he hesitated about mingling in an affray so ferocious. At this critical moment, when it seemed that the furious brutes were on the point of tearing each other in pieces, the crowd was pushed violently open, and two men burst, side by side, out of the mass. One wore the black robes, the conical, Asiatic looking, tufted cap, and the white belt of an Augustine monk, and the other had the attire of a man addicted to the seas, without, however, being so decidedly maritime as to leave his character a matter that was quite beyond dispute. The former was fair, ruddy, with an oval, happy face, of which internal peace and good-will to his fellows were the principal characteristics, while the latter had the swarthy hue, bold lineaments, and glittering eye, of an Italian.

"Uberto!" said the monk reproachfully, affecting the sort of offended manner that one would be apt to show to a more intelligent creature, willing, but at the same time afraid, to trust his person nearer to the furious conflict, "shame on thee, old Uberto! Hast forgotten thy schooling—hast no respect for thine own good name?"

On the other hand, the Italian did not stop to expostulate; but throwing himself with reckless hardihood on the dogs, by dint of kicks and blows, of which much the heaviest portion fell on the follower of Augustine, he succeeded in separating the combatants.

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"Ha, Nettuno!" he exclaimed, with the severity of one accustomed to exercise a stern and absolute authority, so soon as this daring exploit was achieved, and he had recovered a little of the breath lost in the violent exertion—"what dost mean? Canst find no better amusement than quarrelling with a dog of San Bernardo! Fie upon thee, foolish Nettuno! I am ashamed of thee, dog: thou, that hast discreetly navigated so many seas, to lose thy temper on a bit of fresh water!"

The dog, which was in truth no other than a noble animal of the well-known Newfoundland breed, hung his head, and made signs of contrition, by drawing nearer to his master with a tail that swept the ground, while his late adversary quietly seated himself with a species of monastic dignity, looking from the speaker to his foe, as if endeavoring to comprehend the rebuke which his powerful and gallant antagonist took so meekly.

"Father," said the Italian, "our dogs are both too useful, in their several ways, and both of too good character to be enemies. I know Uberto of old, for the paths of St. Bernard and I are no strangers, and, if report does the animal no more than justice, he hath not been an idle cur among the snows."

"He hath been the instrument of saving seven Christians from death," answered the monk, beginning again to regard his mastiff with friendly looks, for at first there had been keen reproach and severe displeasure in his manner—"not to speak of the bodies that have been found by his activity, after the vital spark had fled."

"As for the latter, father, we can count little more in favor of the dog than a good intention. Valuing services on this scale, I might ere this have been the Holy Father himself, or at least a cardinal; but seven lives saved, for their owners to die quietly in their beds, and with opportunity to make their peace with heaven, is no bad recommendation for a dog. Nettuno, here, is every way worthy to be the friend of old Uberto, for thirteen drowning men have I myself seen him draw from the greedy jaws of sharks and other monsters of deep water. What dost thou say, father, shall we make peace between the brutes?"

The Augustine expressed his readiness, as well as his desire, to aid in an effort so laudable, and by dint of commands and persuasion, the dogs, who were predisposed to peace from having had a mutual taste of the bitterness of war, and who now felt for each other the respect which courage and force are apt to create, were soon on the usual terms of animals of their kind that have no particular grounds for contention.

The guardian of the city improved the calm produced by this little incident, to regain a portion of his lost authority. Beating back the crowd with his cane, he cleared a space around the gate into which but one of the travellers could enter at a time, while he professed himself not only ready but determined to proceed with his duty, without further procrastination. Baptiste, the patron, who beheld the precious moments wasting, and who, in the delay, foresaw a loss of wind, which, to one of his pursuits, was loss of money, now earnestly pressed the travellers to comply with the necessary forms, and to take their stations in his bark with all convenient speed.

"Of what matter is it," continued the calculating waterman, who was rather conspicuously known for the love of thrift that is usually attributed to most of the inhabitants of that region, "whether there be one headsman or twenty in the bark, so long as the good vessel can float and steer? Our Leman winds are fickle friends, and the wise take them while in the humor. Give me the breeze at west, and I will load the Winkelried to the water's edge with executioners, or any other pernicious creatures thou wilt, and thou mayest take the lightest bark that ever swam in the *bise*, and let us see who will first make the haven of Vévey!"

The loudest, and in a sense that is very important in all such discussions, the principal speaker in the dispute was the leader of the Neapolitan *troupe*, who, in virtue of good lungs, an agility that had no competitor in any present, and a certain mixture of superstition and bravado, that formed nearly equal ingredients in his character, was a man likely to gain great influence with those who, from their ignorance and habits, had an inherent love of the marvellous, and a profound respect for all who possessed, in acting, more audacity, and, in believing, more credulity

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than themselves. The vulgar like an excess, even if it be of folly; for, in their eyes, the abundance of any particular quality is very apt to be taken as the standard of its excellence.

"This is well for him who receives, but it may be death to him that pays," cried the son of the south, gaining not a little among his auditors by the distinction, for the argument was sufficiently wily, as between the buyer and the seller. "Thou wilt get thy silver for the risk, and we may get watery graves for our weakness. Naught but mishaps can come of wicked company, and accursed will they be, in the evil hour, that are found in brotherly communion with one whose trade is hurrying Christians into eternity, before the time that has been lent by nature is fairly up. Santa Madre! I would not be the fellow-traveller of such a wretch, across this wild and changeable lake, for the honor of leaping and showing my poor powers in the presence of the Holy Father, and the whole of the learned conclave!"

This solemn declaration, which was made with suitable gesticulation, and an action of the countenance that was well adapted to prove the speaker's sincerity, produced a corresponding effect on most of the listeners, who murmured their applause in a manner sufficiently significant to convince the patron he was not about to dispose of the difficulty simply by virtue of fair words. In this dilemma, he bethought him of a plan of overcoming the scruples of all present, in which he was warmly seconded by the agent of the police, and to which, after the usual number of cavilling objections that were generated by distrust, heated blood, and the obstinacy of disputation, the other parties were finally induced to give their consent. It was agreed that the examination should no longer be delayed, but that a species of deputation from the crowd might take their stand within the gate, where all who passed would necessarily be subject to their scrutiny, and, in the event of their vigilance detecting the abhorred and proscribed Balthazar, that the patron should return his money to the headsman, and preclude him from forming one of a party that was so scrupulous of its association, and apparently with so little reason. The Neapolitan, whose name was Pippo; one of the indigent scholars, for a century since learning was rather an auxiliary than the foe of superstition; and a certain Nicklaus Wagner, a fat Bernese, who was the owner of most of the cheeses in the bark, were the chosen of the multitude on this occasion. The first owed his election to his vehemence and volubility, qualities that the ignoble vulgar are very apt to mistake for conviction and knowledge; the second to his silence and a demureness of air which pass with another class for the stillness of deep water; and the last to his substance, as a man of known wealth, an advantage which, in spite of all that alarmists predict on one side, and enthusiasts affirm on the other, will always carry greater weight with those who are less fortunate in this respect, than is either reasonable or morally healthful, provided it is not abused by arrogance or the assumption of very extravagant and oppressive privileges. As a matter of course, these deputed guardians of the common rights were first obliged to submit their own papers to the eye of the Genevese.*

The Neapolitan, than whom an archer knave, or one that had committed more petty wrongs, did not present himself that day at the water-gate, was regularly fortified by every precaution that the long experience of a vagabond could suggest, and he was permitted to pass forthwith. The poor Westphalian student presented an instrument fairly written out in a scholastic Latin, and escaped further trouble by the vanity of the unlettered agent of the police, who hastily affirmed it was a pleasure to encounter documents so perfectly in form. But the Bernese was about to take his station by the side of the other two, appearing to think inquiry in his case unnecessary. While moving through the passage in stately silence, Nicklaus Wagner was occupied in securing the strings of a

* As we have so often alluded to this examination, it may be well to explain that the present system of gendarmerie and passports did not then prevail in Europe; taking their rise nearly a century later than that in which the events of this tale had place. But Geneva was a small and exposed state, and the regulation to which there is reference here, was one of the provisions which were resorted to from time to time in order to protect those liberties and that independence, of which its citizens were so unceasingly and so wisely jealous.

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well-filled purse, which he had just lightened of a small copper coin to reward the varlet of the hostelry in which he had passed the night, and who had been obliged to follow him to the port to obtain even this scanty boon; and the Genevese was fain to believe that, in the urgency of this important concern, he had overlooked those forms which all were just then obliged to respect, on quitting the town.

"Thou hast a name and character?" observed the latter, with official brevity.

"God help thee, friend! I did not think Geneva had been so particular with a Swiss; —and a Swiss who is so favorably known on the Aar, and indeed over the whole of the great canton! I am Nicklaus Wagner, a name of little account, perhaps, but which is well esteemed among men of substance, and which has a right even to the Bürgerschaft —Nicklaus Wagner of Berne—thou wilt scarce need more?"

"Naught but proof of its truth. Thou wilt remember this is Geneva; the laws of a small and exposed state need be particular in affairs of this nature."

"I never questioned thy state being Geneva; I only wonder thou shouldst doubt my being Nicklaus! I can journey the darkest night that ever threw a shadow from the mountains, anywhere between the Jura and the Oberland, and none shall say my word is to be disputed. Look'ee, there is the patron, Baptiste, who will tell thee, that if he were to land the freight which is shipped in my name, his bark would float greatly the lighter."

All this time Nicklaus was loath to show his papers, which were quite in rule. He even held them, with a thumb and finger separating the folds, ready to be presented to his questioner. The hesitation came from a feeling of wounded vanity, which would gladly show that one of his local importance and known substance was to be exempt from the exactions required from men of smaller means. The officer, who had great practice in this species of collision with his fellow creatures, understood the character with which he had to deal, and seeing no good reason for refusing to gratify a feeling which was innocent, though sufficiently silly, he yielded to the Bernese pride.

"Thou canst proceed," he said, turning the indulgence to account, with a ready knowledge of his duty; "and when thou gettest again among thy burghers, do us of Geneva the grace to say, we treat our allies fairly."

"I thought thy question hasty!" exclaimed the wealthy peasant, swelling like one who gets justice though tardily. "Now let us to this knotty affair of the headsman."

Taking his place with the Neapolitan and the Westphalian, Nicklaus assumed the grave air of a judge, and an austerity of manner which proved that he entered on his duty with a firm resolution to do justice.

"Thou art well known here, pilgrim," observed the officer, with some severity of tone, to the next that came to the gate.

"St. Francis to speed, master, it were else wonderful! I should be so, for the seasons scarce come and go more regularly."

"There must be a sore conscience somewhere, that Rome and thou should need each other so often?"

The pilgrim, who was enveloped in a tattered coat, sprinkled with cockle-shells, who wore his beard, and was altogether a disgusting picture of human depravity, rendered still more revolting by an ill-concealed hypocrisy, laughed openly and recklessly at the remark.

"Thou art a follower of Calvin, master," he replied, "or thou would'st not have said this. My own failings give me little trouble. I am engaged by certain parishes of Germany to take upon my poor person their physical pains, and it is not easy to name another that hath done as many messages of this kind as myself, with better proofs of fidelity. If thou hast any little offering to make, thou shalt see fair papers to prove what I say;—papers that would pass at St. Peter's itself!"

The officer perceived that he had to do with one of those unequivocal hypocrites—if such a word can properly be applied to him who scarcely thought deception necessary—who then made a traffic of expiations of this nature; a pursuit that was common enough at the close of the seventeenth and in the commencement of the eighteenth century, and which has not even yet entirely disappeared from Europe. He threw the pass

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with unconcealed aversion toward the profligate, who, recovering his document, assumed unasked his station by the side of the three who had been selected to decide on the fitness of those who were to be allowed to embark.

"Go to!" cried the officer, as he permitted this ebullition of disgust to escape him; "thou hast well said that we are followers of Calvin. Geneva has little in common with her of the scarlet mantle, and thou wilt do well to remember this, in thy next pilgrimage, lest the beadle make acquaintance with thy back. Hold! who art thou?"

"A heretic, hopelessly damned by anticipation, if that of yonder travelling prayer-monger be the true faith;" answered one who was pressing past, with a quiet assurance that had near carried its point without incurring the risks of the usual investigation into his name and character. It was the owner of Nettuno, whose aquatic air and perfect self-possession now caused the officer to doubt whether he had not stopped a waterman of the lake—a class privileged to come and go at will.

"Thou knowest our usages," said the half-satisfied Genevese.

"I were a fool else! Even the ass that often travels the same path comes in time to tell its turns and windings. Art not satisfied with touching the pride of the worthy Nicklaus Wagner, by putting the well-warmed burgher to his proofs, but thou would'st e'en question me! Come hither, Nettuno; thou shalt answer for both, being a dog of discretion. We are no go-betweens of heaven and earth, thou knowest, but creatures that come part of the water and part of the land!"

The Italian spoke loud and confidently, and in the manner of one who addressed himself more to the humors of those near than to the understanding of the Genevese. He laughed, and looked about him in a manner to extract an echo from the crowd, though not one among them all could probably have given a sufficient reason why he had so readily taken part with the stranger against the authorities of the town, unless it might have been from the instinct of opposition to the law.

"Thou hast a name!" continued the half-yielding, half-doubting guardian of the port.

"Dost take me to be worse off than the bark of Baptiste, there? I have papers, too, if thou wilt that I go to the vessel in order to seek them. This dog is Nettuno, a brute from a far country, where brutes swim like fishes, and my name is Maso, though wicked-minded men call me oftener Il Maledetto than by any other title."

All in the throng, who understood the signification of what the Italian said, laughed aloud, and apparently with great glee, for, to the grossly vulgar, extreme audacity has an irresistible charm. The officer felt that the merriment was against him, though he scarce knew why; and ignorant of the language in which the other had given his extraordinary appellation, he yielded to the contagion, and laughed with the others, like one who understood the joke to the bottom. The Italian profited by this advantage, nodded familiarly with a good-natured and knowing smile, and proceeded. Whistling the dog to his side, he walked leisurely to the bark, into which he was the first that entered, always preserving the deliberation and calm of a man who felt himself privileged, and safe from further molestation. This cool audacity effected its purpose, though one long and closely hunted by the law evaded the authorities of the town, when this singular being took his seat by the little package which contained his scanty wardrobe.

CHAPTER II.

"My nobiel liege! all my request
Ys for a nobile knyghte,
Who, tho' mayhap he has done wronge,
Hee thoughte ytt stylle was righte."

CHATTERTON.

WHILE this impudent evasion of vigilance was successfully practised by so old an offender, the trio of sentinels, with their volunteer assistant, the pilgrim, manifested the greatest anxiety to prevent the contamination of admitting the highest executioner of the law to form one of the strangely assorted company. No sooner did the Genevese permit a traveller to pass, then they commenced their private and particular examination, which was sufficiently fierce, for more than once had they threatened to turn back the trembling, ignorant applicant on mere sus-

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picion. The cunning Baptiste lent himself to their feelings with the skill of a demagogue, affecting a zeal equal to their own, while, at the same time, he took care most to excite their suspicions where there was the smallest danger of their being rewarded with success. Through this fiery ordeal one passed after another, until most of the nameless vagabonds had been found innocent, and the throng around the gate was so far lessened as to allow a freer circulation in the thoroughfare. The opening permitted the venerable noble, who has already been presented to the reader, to advance to the gate, accompanied by the female, and closely followed by the menials. The servitor of the police saluted the stranger with deference, for his calm exterior and imposing presence were in singular contrast with the noisy declamation and rude deportment of the rabble that had preceded.

"I am Melchior de Willading, of Berne," said the traveller, quietly offering the proofs of what he said, with the ease of one sure of his impunity; "this is my child—my only child;" the old man repeated the latter words with melancholy emphasis; "and these, that wear my livery, are old and faithful followers of my house. We go by the St. Bernard, to change the ruder side of our Alps for that which is more grateful to the weak—to see if there be a sun in Italy that hath warmth enough to revive this drooping flower, and to cause it once more to raise its head joyously, as until lately it did ever in its native halls."

The officer smiled and repeated his reverences, always declining to receive the offered papers; for the aged father indulged the overflowing of his feelings in a manner that would have awakened even duller sympathies.

"The lady has youth and a tender parent on her side," he said; "these are much when health fails us."

"She is indeed too young to sink so early!" returned the father, who had apparently forgotten his immediate business, and was gazing with a tearful eye at the faded but still eminently attractive features of the young female, who rewarded his solicitude with a look of love; "but thou hast not seen I am the man I represent myself to be."

"It is not necessary, noble Baron; the city knows of your presence, and I have it in especial charge to do all that may be grateful to render the passage through Geneva, of one so honored among our allies, agreeable to his recollections."

"Thy city's courtesy is of known repute," said the Baron de Willading, replacing his papers in their usual envelope, and receiving the grace like one accustomed to honors of this sort:—"art thou a father?"

"Heaven has not been niggardly of gifts of this nature; my table feeds eleven, besides those who gave them being."

"Eleven! The will of God is a fearful mystery! And this thou seest is the full hope of my line;—the only heir that is left to the name and lands of Willading. Art thou at ease in thy condition?"

"There are those in our town who are less so, with many thanks for the friendliness of the question."

A slight color suffused the face of Adelheid de Willading, for so was the daughter of the Bernese called, and she advanced a step nearer to the officer.

"They who have so few at their own board, need think of those who have so many," she said, dropping a piece of gold into the hand of the Genevese; then she added, in a voice scarce louder than a whisper—"If the young and innocent of thy household can offer a prayer in the behalf of a poor girl who has much need of aid, 'twill be remembered of God, and it may serve to lighten the grief of one who has the dread of being childless."

"God bless thee, lady!" said the officer, little used to deal with such spirits, and touched by the mild resignation and piety of the speaker, whose simple but winning manner moved him nearly to tears; "all of my family, old as well as young, shall bethink them of thee and thine."

Adelheid's cheek resumed its paleness, and she quietly accompanied her father, as he slowly proceeded toward the bark. A scene of this nature did not fail to shake the pertinacity of those who stood at watch near the gate. Of course they had nothing to say to any of the rank of Melcourse de Willading, who went into the bark without a question. The influence of beauty and station, united to so much simple grace as that shown by the fair actor in the little incident we have just related, was much too strong for the ill-trained feelings of the Neapolitan and his

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companions. They not only let all the menials pass unquestioned also, but it was some little time before their vigilance resumed its former truculence. The two or three travellers that succeeded had the benefit of this fortunate change of disposition.

The next who came to the gate was the young soldier, whom the Baron de Willading had so often addressed as Monsieur Sigismund. His papers were regular, and no obstacle was offered to his departure. It may be doubted how far this young man would have been disposed to submit to these extra-official inquiries of the three deputies of the crowd, had there been a desire to urge them, for he went toward the quay with an eye that expressed any other sensation than that of amity or compliance. Respect, or a more equivocal feeling, proved his protection; for none but the pilgrim, who displayed ultra zeal in the pursuit of his object, ventured so far as to hazard even a smothered remark as he passed.

"There goes an arm and a sword that might well shorten a Christian's days," said the dissolute and shameless dealer in the Church's abuses, "and yet no one asks his name or calling!"

"Thou hadst better put the question thyself," returned the sneering Pippo, "since penitence is thy trade. For myself, I am content with whirling round at my own bidding, without taking a hint from that young giant's arm."

The poor scholar and the Burgher of Berne appeared to acquiesce in this opinion, and no more was said in the matter. In the meanwhile there was another at the gate. The new applicant had little in his exterior to renew the vigilance of the superstitious trio. A quiet, meek-looking man, seemingly of middle condition in life, and of an air altogether calm and unpretending, had submitted his passport to the faithful guardian of the city. The latter read the document, cast a quick and inquiring glance at its owner, and returned the paper in a way to show haste, and a desire to be rid of him.

"It is well," he said; "thou canst go thy way."

"How now!" cried the Neapolitan, to whom buffoonery was a congenial employment, as much by natural disposition as by practice; "how now!—have we Balthazar at last in this bloody-minded and fierce-looking traveller?" As the speaker had expected, this sally was rewarded by a general laugh, and he was accordingly encouraged to proceed. "Thou knowest our office, friend," added the unfeeling mountebank, "and must show us thy hands. None pass who bear the stain of blood!"

The traveller appeared staggered, for he was plainly a man of retired and peaceable habits, who had been thrown, by the chances of the road, in contact with one only too practised in this unfeeling species of wit. He showed his open palm, however, with a direct and confiding simplicity that drew a shout of merriment from all the bystanders.

"This will not do; soap, and ashes, and the tears of victims, may have washed out the marks of his work from Balthazar himself. The spots we seek are on the soul, man, and we must look into that, ere thou art permitted to make one in this goodly company."

"Thou didst not question yonder young soldier thus," returned the stranger, whose eye kindled, as even the meek repel unprovoked outrage, though his frame trembled violently at being subject to open insults from men so rude and unprincipled; "thou didst not dare to question yonder young soldier thus!"

"By the prayers of San Gennaro! which are known to stop running and melted lava, I would rather thou shouldst undertake that office than I. Yonder young soldier is an honorable decapitator, and it is a pleasure to be his companion on a journey; for, no doubt, some six or eight of the saints are speaking in his behalf daily. But he we seek is the outcast of all, good or bad, whether in heaven or on earth, or in that other hot abode to which he will surely be sent when his time has come."

"And yet he does no more than execute the law!"

"What is law to opinion, friend? But go thy way; none suspect thee to be the redoubtable enemy of our heads. Go thy way, for Heaven's sake, and mutter thy prayers to be delivered from Balthazar's axe."

The countenance of the stranger worked, as if he would have answered; then suddenly changing his purpose, he passed on, and in-

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stantly disappeared in the bark. The monk of St. Bernard came next. Both the Augustine and his dog were old acquaintances of the officer, who did not require any evidence of his character or errand from the former.

"We are the protectors of life and not its foes," observed the monk, as, leaving the more regular watchman of the place, he drew near to those whose claims to the office would have admitted of dispute; "we live among the snows, that Christians may not die without the Church's comfort."

"Honor, holy Augustine, to thee and thy office!" said the Neapolitan, who, reckless and abandoned as he was, possessed that instinct of respect for those who deny their natures for the good of others which is common to all, however tainted by cupidity themselves. "Thou and thy dog, old Uberto, can freely pass, with our best good wishes for both."

There no longer remained any to examine, and, after a short consultation among the more superstitious of the travellers, they came to the very natural opinion that, intimidated by their just remonstrances, the offensive headsman had shrunk, unperceived, from the crowd, and that they were at length haply relieved from his presence. The annunciation of the welcome tidings drew much self-felicitation from the different members of the motley company, and all eagerly embarked, for Baptiste now loudly and vehemently declared that a single moment of further delay was entirely out of the question.

"Of what are you thinking, men!" he exclaimed with well-acted heat; "are the Leman winds liveried lackeys, to come and go as may suit your fancies; now to blow west, and now east, as shall be most wanted, to help you on your journeys? Take example of the noble Melchior de Willading, who has long been in his place, and pray the saints, if you will, in your several fashions, that this fair western wind do not quit us in punishment of our neglect."

"Yonder come others, in haste to be of the party!" interrupted the cunning Italian; "loosen thy fasts quickly, Master Baptiste, or, by San Gennaro! we shall still be detained!"

The patron suddenly checked himself, and hurried back to the gate, in order to ascertain what he might expect from this unlooked-for turn of fortune.

Two travellers, in the attire of men familiar with the road, accompanied by a menial, and followed by a porter staggering under the burden of their luggage, were fast approaching the water-gate, as if conscious the least delay might cause their being left. This party was led by one considerably past the meridian of life, and who evidently was enabled to maintain his post more by the deference of his companions than by his physical force. A cloak was thrown across one arm, while in the hand of the other he carried the rapier, which all of gentle blood then considered a necessary appendage of their rank.

"You were near losing the last bark that sails for the Abbaye des Vignerons, signori," said the Genevese, recognizing the country of the strangers at a glance, "if, as I judge from your direction and haste, these festivities are in your minds."

"Such is our aim," returned the elder of the travellers, "and, as thou sayest, we are, of a certainty, tardy. A hasty departure and bad roads have been the cause—but as happily we are yet in time to profit by this bark, wilt do us the favor to look into our authority to pass?"

The officer perused the offered document with the customary care, turning it from side to side, as if all were not right, though in a way to show that he regretted the informality.

"Signore, your pass is quite in rule as touches Savoy and the country of Nice, but it wants the city's forms."

"By San Francesco! more's the pity. We are honest gentlemen of Genoa, hurrying to witness the revels at Vévey, of which rumor gives an enticing report, and our sole desire is to come and go peaceably. As thou seest, we are late; for hearing at the post, on alighting, that a bark was about to spread its sails for the other extremity of the lake, we had no time to consult all the observances that thy city's rules may deem necessary. So many turn their faces the same way, to witness these ancient games, that we had not thought our quick passage through the town of sufficient importance to give thy authorities the trouble to look into our proofs."

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"Therein, signore, you have judged amiss. It is my sworn duty to stay all who want the republic's permission to proceed."

"That is unfortunate, to say no more. Art thou the patron of the bark, friend?"

"And her owner, signore," answered Baptiste, who listened to the discourse with longings equal to his doubts. "I should be a great deal too happy to count such honorable travellers among my passengers."

"Thou wilt then delay thy departure until this gentleman shall see the authorities of the town, and obtain the required permission to quit it? Thy compliance shall not go unrewarded."

As the Genoese concluded, he dropped into a palm that was well practised in bribes, a sequin of the celebrated republic of which he was a citizen. Baptiste had long cultivated an apitude to suffer himself to be influenced by gold, and it was with unfeigned reluctance that he admitted the necessity of refusing, in this instance, to profit by his own good dispositions. Still retaining the money, however, for he did not well know how to overcome his reluctance to part with it, he answered in a manner sufficiently embarrassed to show the other that he had at least gained a material advantage by his liberality.

"His Excellency knows not what he asks," said the patron, fumbling the coin between a finger and thumb; "our Genevese citizens love to keep house till the sun is up, lest they should break their necks by walking about the uneven streets in the dark, and it will be two long hours before a single bureau will open its windows in the town. Besides, your man of the police is not like us of the lake, happy to get a morsel when the weather and occasion permit; but he is a regular feeder, that must have his grapes and his wine before he will use his wits for the benefit of his employers. The Winkelried would weary of doing nothing, with this fresh western breeze humming between her masts, while the poor gentleman was swearing before the town-house gate at the laziness of the officers. I know the rogues better than your Excellency, and would advise some other expedient."

Baptiste looked, with a certain expression, at the guardian of the water-gate, and in a manner to make his meaning sufficiently clear to the travellers. The latter studied the countenance of the Genevese a moment, and, better practised than the patron, or a more enlightened judge of character, he fortunately refused to commit himself by offering to purchase the officer's good-will. If there are too many who love to be tempted to forget their trusts, by a well-managed venality, there are few who find a greater satisfaction in being thought beyond its influence. The watchman of the gate happened to be one of the latter class, and by one of the many unaccountable workings of human feeling, the very vanity which had induced him to suffer Il Maledetto to go through unquestioned, rather than expose his own ignorance, now led him to wish he might make some return for the stranger's good opinion of his honesty.

"Will you let me look again at the pass, signor?" said the Genevese, as if he thought a sufficient legal warranty for that which he now strongly desired to do might yet be found in the instrument itself.

The inquiry was useless, unless it was to show that the elder Genoese was called the Signor Grimaldi, and that his companion went by the name of Marcelli. Shaking his head he returned the paper in the manner of a disappointed man.

"Thou canst not have read of what the paper contains," said Baptiste, peevishly; "your reading and writing are not such easy matters, that a squint of the eye is all-sufficient. Look at it again, and thou mayest yet find all in rule. It is unreasonable to suppose signori of their rank would journey like vagabonds, with paper to be suspected."

"Nothing is wanting but our city signatures, without which my duty will let none go by, that are truly travellers."

"This comes, signor, of the accursed art of writing, which is much pushed and greatly abused of late. I have heard the aged waterman of the Leman praise the good old time, when boxes and bales went and came, and no ink touched paper between him that sent and him that carried; and yet it has now reached the pass that a Christian may not 'ransport himself on his own legs without calling on the scriveners for permission."

"We lose the moment in words, when it

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were far better to be doing," returned the Signor Grimaldi. "The pass is luckily in the language of the country, and needs but a glance to get the approval of the authorities. Thou wilt do well to say thou canst remain the time necessary to see this little done."

"Were your Excellency to offer me the Doge's crown as a bribe, this could not be. Our Leman winds will not wait for king or noble, bishop or priest, and duty to those I have in the bark commands me to quit the port as soon as possible."

"Thou art truly well charged with living freight already," said the Genoese, regarding the deeply loaded bark with a half-distrustful eye. "I hope thou hast not overdone thy vessel's powers in receiving so many?"

"I could gladly reduce the number a little, excellent signor, for all that you see piled among the boxes and tubs are no better than so many knaves, fit only to give trouble and raise questions touching the embarkation of those who are willing to pay better than themselves. The noble Swiss whom you see seated near the stern, with his daughter and people, the worthy Melchior de Willading, gives a more liberal reward for his passage to Vévey than all those nameless rogues together."

The Genoese made a hasty movement toward the patron, with an earnestness of eye and air that betrayed a sudden and singular interest in what he heard.

"Didst thou say De Willading?" he exclaimed, eager as one of much fewer years would have been at the unexpected announcement of some pleasurable event. "Melchior, too, of that honorable name?"

"Signor, the same. None other bears the title now, for the old line they say is drawing to an end. I remember this same baron, when he was as ready to launch his boat into a troubled lake as any in Switzerland——"

"Fortune hath truly favored me, good Marcelli!" interrupted the other, grasping the hand of his companion with strong feeling. "Go thou to the bark, master patron, and advise thy passenger that—what shall we say to Melchior? Shall we tell him at once who waits him here, or shall we practise a little on his failing memory? By San Francesco! we will do this, Enrico, that we may try his powers! 'Twill be pleasant to see him wonder and guess—my life on it, however, that he knows me at a glance. I am truly little changed for one who hath seen so much."

The Signor Marcelli lowered his eyes respectfully at this opinion of his friend, but he did not see fit to discourage a belief which was merely a sudden ebullition, produced by the recollection of younger days. Baptiste was instantly despatched with a request that the Baron would do a stranger of rank the favor to come to the water-gate.

"Tell him 'tis a traveller disappointed in the wish to be of his company," repeated the Genoese. "That will suffice. I know him courteous, and he is not my Melchior, honest Marcelli, if he delay an instant:—thou seest! he is already quitting the bark, for never did I know him refuse an act of friendliness—dear, dear Melchior—thou art the same at seventy as thou wast at thirty!"

Here the agitation of the Genoese got the better of him, and he walked aside under a sense of shame, lest he might betray unmanly weakness. In the meantime the Baron de Willading advanced from the water-side, without suspecting that his presence was required for more than an act of simple courtesy.

"Baptiste tells me that gentlemen of Genoa are here who are desirous of hastening to the games of Vévey," said the latter, raising his beaver, "and that my presence may be of use in obtaining the pleasure of their company."

"I will not unmask until we are fairly and decently embarked, Enrico," whispered Signor Grimaldi; "nay—by the mass! not till we are fairly disembarked! The laugh against him will never be forgotten. Signor," addressing the Bernese with affected composure, endeavoring to assume the manner of a stranger, though his voice trembled with eagerness at each syllable, "we are indeed of Genoa, and most anxious to be of the party in your bark—but—he little suspects who speaks to him, Marcelli!—but, signor, there has been some small oversight touching the city signatures, and we have need of friendly assistance either to pass the gate, or to detain the bark until the forms of the place shall have been respected."

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"Signor, the city of Geneva hath need to be watchful, for it is an exposed and weak state, and I have little hope that my influence can cause this trusty watchman to dispense with his duty. Touching the bark, a small gratuity will do much with honest Baptiste, should there not be a question of the stability of the breeze, in which case he might be somewhat of a loser."

"You say the truth, noble Melchior," put in the patron, "were the wind ahead, or were it two hours earlier in the morning, the little delay should not cost the strangers a batz—that is to say, nothing unreasonable; but as it is, I have not twenty minutes more to lose, even were all the city magistrates cloaking to be of the party, in their proper and worshipful persons."

"I greatly regret, signor, it should be so," resumed the Baron, turning to the applicant with the consideration of one accustomed to season his refusals by a gracious manner; "but these watermen have their secret signs, by which it would seem they know the latest moment they may with prudence delay."

"By the mass! Marcelli, I will try him a little—I should have known him in a carnival dress. Signor Barone, we are but poor Italian gentlemen, it is true, of Genoa. You have heard of our Republic, beyond question—the poor state of Genoa?"

"Though of no great pretensions to letters, signor," answered Melchior, smiling, "I am not quite ignorant that such a state exists. You could not have named a city on the shores of your Mediterranean that would sooner warm my heart than this very town of which you speak. Many of my happiest hours were passed within its walls, and often, even at this late day, do I live over again my life to recall the pleasures of that merry period. Were there leisure I could repeat a list of honorable and much esteemed names that are familiar to your ears, in proof of what I say."

"Name them, Signor Barone;—for the love of the saints and the blessed Virgin, name them, I beseech you!"

A little amazed at the eagerness of the other, Melchior de Willading earnestly regarded his furrowed face; and, for an instant, an expression like incertitude crossed his own features.

"Nothing would be easier, signor, than to name many. The first in my memory, as he has always been the first in my love, is Gaetano Grimaldi, of whom, I doubt not, both of you have often heard?"

"We have, we have! That is—yes, I think we may say, Marcelli, that we have often heard of him, and not unfavorably. Well, what of this Grimaldi?"

"Signor, the desire to converse of your noble townsman is natural, but were I to yield to my wishes to speak of Gaetano, I fear the honest Baptiste might have reason to complain."

"To the devil with Baptiste and his bark! Melchior,—my good Melchior!—dearest, dearest Melchior! hast thou indeed forgotten me?"

Here the Genoese opened wide his arms, and stood ready to receive the embrace of his friend. The Baron de Willading was troubled, but he was still so far from suspecting the real fact, that he could not have easily told the reason why. He gazed wistfully at the working features of the fine old man who stood before him, and though memory seemed to flit around the truth, it was in gleams so transient as completely to baffle his wishes.

"Dost thou deny me, De Willading?—dost thou refuse to own the friend of thy youth—the companion of thy pleasures—the sharer of thy sorrows—thy comrade in the wars—nay, more—thy confidant in a dearer tie?"

"None but Gaetano Grimaldi himself can claim these titles!" burst from the lips of the trembling Baron.

"Am I aught else?—am I not this Gaetano?—that Gaetano—thy Gaetano,—old and very dear?"

"Thou Gaetano!" exclaimed the Bernois, recoiling a step, instead of advancing to meet the eager embrace of the Genoese, whose impetuous feelings were little cooled by time—"thou, the gallant, active, daring, blooming Grimaldi! Signor, you trifle with an old man's affections."

"By the holy mass, I do not deceive thee! Ha, Marcelli, he is slow to believe as ever, but fast and certain as the vow of a churchman when convinced. If we are to distrust each other for a few wrinkles, thou wilt find objections rising against thine own identity

as well as against mine, friend Melchior. I am none other than Gaetano—the Gaetano of thy youth—the friend thou hast not seen these many long and weary years."

Recognition was slow in making its way in the mind of the Bernese. Lineament after lineament, however, became successively known to him, and most of all, the voice served to awaken long dormant recollections. But as heavy natures are said to have the least self-command when fairly excited, so did the Baron betray the most ungovernable emotion of the two, when conviction came at last to confirm the words of his friend. He threw himself on the neck of the Genoese, and the old man wept in a manner that caused him to withdraw aside, in order to conceal the tears which had so suddenly and profusely broken from the fountains that he had long thought nearly dried.

CHAPTER III.

"Ha, cousin Silence, that thou hadst seen
That, that this knight and I have seen!"
King Henry IV.

THE calculating patron of the Winkelried had patiently watched the progress of the foregoing scene with great inward satisfaction, but now that the stranger seemed to be assured of support powerful as that of Melchior de Willading, he was disposed to turn it to account without further delay. The old men were still standing with their hands grasping each other, after another warm and still closer embrace, and with tears rolling down the furrowed face of each, when Baptiste advanced to put in his raven-like remonstrance.

"Noble gentlemen," he said, "if the felicitations of one humble as I can add to the pleasure of this happy meeting, I beg you to accept them; but the wind has no heart for friendships nor any thought for the gains or losses of us watermen. I feel it my duty, as patron of the bark, to recall to your honors that many poor travellers, far from their homes and pining families, are waiting our leisure, not to speak of foot-sore pilgrims and other worthy adventurers, who are impatient in their hearts, though respect for their superiors keeps them tongue-tied, while we are losing the best of the breeze."

"By San Francesco! the varlet is right," said the Genoese, hurriedly erasing the marks of his recent weakness from his cheeks. "We are forgetful of all these worthy people, while joy at our meeting is so strong, and it is time that we thought of others. Canst thou aid me in dispensing with the city's signatures?"

The Baron de Willading paused; for well-disposed at first to assist any gentlemen who found themselves in an unpleasant embarassment, it will be readily imagined that the case lost none of its interest, when he found that his oldest and most tried friend was the party in want of his influence. Still it was much easier to admit the force of this new and unexpected appeal, than to devise the means of success. The officer was, to use a phrase which most men seem to think supplies a substitute for reason and principle, too openly committed to render it probable he would easily yield. It was necessary, however, to make the trial, and the Baron, therefore, addressed the keeper of the water-gate more urgently than he had yet done in behalf of the strangers.

"It is beyond my functions; there is not one of our Syndics whom I would more gladly oblige than yourself, noble Baron," answered the officer; "but the duty of the watchman is to adhere strictly to the commands of those who have placed him at his post."

"Gaetano, we are not the men to complain of this! We have stood together too long in the same trench, and have too often slept soundly, in situations where failure in this doctrine might have cost us our lives, to quarrel with the honest Genevese for his watchfulness. To be frank, 'twere little use to tamper with the fidelity of a Swiss or with that of his ally."

"With the Swiss that is well paid to be vigilant!" answered the Genoese, laughing in a way to show that he had only revived one of those standing but biting jests, that they who love each other best are, perhaps, most accustomed to practise.

The Baron de Willading took the facetiousness of his friend in good part, returning the

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mirth of the other in a manner to show that the allusion recalled days when their hours had idly passed in the indulgence of spontaneous outbreakings of animal spirits.

"Were this thy Italy, Gaetano, a sequin would not only supply the place of a dozen signatures, but, by the name of thy favorite, San Francesco, it would give the honest gatekeeper that gift of second-sight, on which the Scottish seers are said to pride themselves."

"Well, the two sides of the Alps will keep their characters, even though we quarrel about their virtues—but we shall never see again the days that we have known! Neither the games of Vévey, nor the use of old jokes, will make us the youths we have been, dear De Willading!"

"Signor, a million of pardons," interrupted Baptiste, "but this western wind is more inconstant even than the spirits of the young."

"The rogue is again right, and we forget yonder cargo of honest travellers, who are wishing us both in Abraham's bosom, for keeping the impatient bark in idleness at the quay. Good Marcelli, hast thou aught to suggest in this strait?"

"Signor, you forget that we have another document that may be found sufficient"—the person questioned, who appeared to fill a middle station between that of a servant and that of a companion, rather hinted than observed.

"Thou sayest true—and yet I would gladly avoid producing it—but anything is better than the loss of thy company, Melchior."

"Name it not! We shall not separate, though the Winkelried rot where she lies. 'Twere easier to separate our faithful cantons than two such friends."

"Nay, noble Baron, you forget the wearied pilgrims and the many anxious travellers in the bark."

"If twenty crowns will purchase thy consent, honest Baptiste, we will have no further discussion."

"It is scarce in human will to withstand you, noble sir! Well, the pilgrims have weary feet, and rest will only fit them the better for the passage of the mountains; and as for the others, why, let them quit the bark, if they dislike the conditions. I am not a man to force my commerce on any."

"Nay, nay, I will have none of this. Keep thy gold, Melchior, and let the honest Baptiste keep his passengers, to say nothing of his conscience."

"I beseech your Excellency," interrupted Baptiste, "not to distress yourself in tenderness for me. I am ready to do far more disagreeable things to oblige so noble a gentleman."

"I will none of it! Signor officer, wilt thou do me the favor to cast a glance at this?"

As the Genoese concluded, he placed in the hands of the watchman at the gate, a paper different from that which he had first shown. The officer perused the new instrument with deep attention, and, when half through its contents, his eyes left the page to become riveted in respectful attention on the face of the expectant Italian. He then read the passport to the end. Raising his cap ceremoniously, the keeper of the gate left the passage free, bowing with deep deference to the strangers.

"Had I sooner known this," he said, "there would have been no delay. I hope your Excellency will consider my ignorance——"

"Name it not, friend. Thou hast done well; in proof of which I beg thy acceptance of a small token of esteem."

The Genoese dropped a sequin into the hand of the officer, passing him, at the same time, on his way to the water-side. As the reluctance of the other to receive gold came rather from a love of duty than from any particular aversion to the metal itself, this second offering met with a more favorable reception than the first. The Baron de Willading was not without surprise at the sudden success of his friend, though he was far too prudent and well bred to let his wonder be seen.

Every obstacle to the departure of the Winkelried was now removed, and Baptiste and his crew were soon actively engaged in loosening the sails and in casting off the fasts. The movement of the bark was at first slow and heavy, for the wind was intercepted by the buildings of the town; but, as she receded from the shore, the canvas began to flap and belly, and ere long it filled outward with a report like that of a musket;

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after which the motion of the travellers began to bear some relation to their nearly exhausted patience.

Soon after the party which had been so long detained at the water-gate were embarked, Adelheid first learned the reason of the delay. She had long known, from the mouth of her father, the name and early history of the Signor Grimaldi, a Genoese of illustrious family, who had been the sworn friend and comrade of Melchior de Willading, when the latter pursued his career in arms in the wars of Italy. These circumstances having passed long before her own birth, and even before the marriage of her parents, and she being the youngest and the only survivor of a numerous family of children, they were, as respected herself, events that already began to assume the hue of history. She received the old man frankly, and even with affection, though in his yielding but still fine form, she had quite as much difficulty as her father in recognizing the young, gay, gallant, brilliant, and handsome Gaetano Grimaldi that her imagination had conceived from the verbal descriptions she had so often heard, and from her fancy was still wont to draw as he was painted in the affectionate descriptions of her father. When he suddenly and affectionately offered a kiss, the color flushed her face, for no man but he to whom she owed her being had ever before taken that liberty; but, after an instant of virgin embarrassment, she laughed, and blushingly presented her cheek to receive the salute.

"The last tidings I had of thee, Melchior," said the Italian, "was the letter sent by the Swiss Embassador, who took our city in his way as he travelled south, and which was written on the occasion of the birth of this very girl."

"Not of this, dear friend, but of an elder sister, who is long since a cherub in heaven. Thou seest the ninth precious gift that God bestowed, and thou seest all that is now left of His bounty."

The countenance of the Signor Grimaldi lost its joyousness, and a deep pause in the discourse succeeded. They lived in an age when communications between friends that were separated by distance, and by the frontiers of different States, were rare and uncertain. The fresh and novel affections of marriage had first broken an intercourse that was continued, under such disadvantages as marked the period, long after their duties called them different ways, and time, with its changes and the embarrassments of wars, had finally destroyed nearly every link in the chain of their correspondence. Each had, therefore, much of a near and interesting character to communicate to the other, and each dreaded to speak, lest he might cause some wound, that was not perfectly healed, to bleed anew. The volume of matter conveyed in the few words uttered by the Baron de Willading, showed both in how many ways they might inflict pain without intention, and how necessary it was to be guarded in their discourse during the first days of their renewed intercourse.

"This girl at least is a treasure of itself, of which I must envy thee the possession," the Signor Grimaldi at length rejoined.

The Swiss made one of those quick movements which betray surprise, and it was very apparent, that, just at the moment, he was more affected by some interest of his friend than by the apprehensions which usually beset him when any very direct allusion was made to his surviving child.

"Gaetano, thou hast a son?"

"He is lost—hopelessly—irretrievably lost—at least, to me!"

These were brief but painful glimpses into each other's concerns, and another melancholy and embarrassed pause followed. As the Baron de Willading witnessed the sorrow that deeply shadowed the face of the Genoese, he almost felt that Providence, in summoning his own boys to early graves, might have spared him the still bitter grief of mourning over the unworthiness of a living son.

"These are God's decrees, Melchior," the Italian continued of his own accord, "and we, as soldiers, as men, and more than either, as Christians, should know how to submit. The letter, of which I spoke, contained the last direct tidings that I received of thy welfare, though different travellers have mentioned thee as among the honored and trusted of thy country, without descending to the particulars of thy private life."

"The retirement of our mountains, and the little intercourse of strangers with the

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Swiss, have denied me even this meagre satisfaction as respects thee and thy fortunes. Since the especial courier sent according to our ancient agreement, to announce——"

The Baron hesitated, for he felt he was again touching on forbidden ground.

"To announce the birth of my unhappy boy," continued the Signor Grimaldi, firmly.

"To announce that much wished-for event, I have not had news of thee, except in a way so vague, as to whet the desire to know more rather than to appease the longings of love."

"These doubts are the penalties that friendship pays to separation. We enlist the affections in youth with the recklessness of hope, and, when called different ways by duties or interest, we first begin to perceive that the world is not the heaven we thought it, but that each enjoyment has its price, as each grief has its solace. Thou hast carried arms since we were soldiers in company?"

"As a Swiss only."

The answer drew a gleam of habitual humor from the keen eye of the Italian, whose countenance was apt to change as rapidly as his thoughts.

"In what service?"

"Nay, a truce to thy old pleasantries, good Grimaldi—and yet I should scarce love thee as I do, wert thou other than thou art! I believe we come at last to prize even the foibles of those we truly esteem!"

"It must be so, young lady, or boyish follies would long since have weaned thy father from me. I have never spared him on the subject of snows and money, and yet he beareth with me marvellously. Well, strong love endureth much. Hath the Baron often spoken to thee of old Grimaldi —young Grimaldi, I should say—and of the many freaks of our thoughtless days?"

"So much, signor," returned Adelheid, who had wept and smiled by turns during the interrupted dialogue of her father and his friend, "that I can repeat most of your youthful histories. The Castle of Willading is deep among the mountains, and it is rare indeed for the foot of stranger to enter its gates. During the long evenings of our severe winters, I have listened as a daughter would be apt to listen to the recital of most of your common adventures, and in listening, I have not only learned to know, but to esteem, one that is justly so dear to my parent."

"I make no doubt now, thou hast the history of the plunge into the canal, by overstooping to see the Venetian beauty, at thy fingers' ends?"

"I do remember some such act of humid gallantry," returned Adelheid, laughing.

"Did thy father tell thee, child, of the manner in which he bore me off in a noble rescue from a deadly charge of the Imperial cavalry?"

"I have heard some slight allusion to such an event, too," returned Adelheid, evidently trying to recall the history of the affair to her mind, "but——"

"Light does he call it, and of small account? I wish never to see another as heavy! This is the impartiality of thy narratives, good Melchior, in which a life preserved, wounds received, and a charge to make the German quail, are set down as matters to be touched with a light hand!"

"If I did thee this service, it was more than deserved by the manner in which, before Milan——"

"Well, let it all pass together. We are old fools, young lady, and should we get garrulous in each other's praise, thou mightest mistake us for braggarts; a character that, in truth, neither wholly merits. Didst thou ever tell the girl, Melchior, of our mad excursion into the forests of the Apennines, in search of a Spanish lady that had fallen into the hands of banditti; and how we passed weeks on a foolish enterprise of errantry, that had become useless by the timely application of a few sequins on the part of the husband, even before we started on the chivalrous, not to say silly, excursion?"

"Say chivalrous, but not silly," answered Adelheid, with the simplicity of a young and sincere mind. "Of this adventure I have heard, but to me it has never seemed ridiculous. A generous motive might well excuse an undertaking of less favorable auspices."

"'Tis fortunate," returned the Signor Grimaldi, thoughtfully, "that if youth and exaggerated opinions lead us to commit mad pranks under the name of spirit and generosity, there are other youthful and generous minds to reflect our sentiments and to smile upon our folly."

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"This is more like the wary gray-headed expounder of wisdom than like the hot-headed Gaetano Grimaldi of old!" exclaimed the Baron, though he laughed while uttering the words, as if he felt at least a portion of the other's indifference to those exaggerated feelings that had entered much into the characters of both in youth. "The time has been when the words policy and calculation would have cost a companion thy favor!"

"'Tis said that the prodigal of twenty makes the miser of seventy. It is certain that even our southern sun does not warm the blood of three-score as suddenly as it heats that of one. But we will not darken thy daughter's views of the future by a picture too faithfully drawn, lest she become wise before her time. I have often questioned, Melchior, which is the most precious gift of nature—a warm fancy, or the colder powers of reason. But if I must say which I most love, the point becomes less difficult of decision. I would prefer each in its season, or rather the two united, with a gradual change in their influence. Let the youth commence with the first in the ascendant, and close with the last. He who begins life too cold a reasoner may end it a calculating egotist; and he who is ruled solely by his imagination is in danger of having his mind so ripened as to bring forth the fruits of a visionary. Had it pleased Heaven to have left me the dear son I possessed for so short a period, I would rather have seen him leaning to the side of exaggeration in his estimate of men before experience came to chill his hopes, than to see him scan his fellows with a too philosophical eye in boyhood. 'Tis said we are but clay at the best; but the ground, before it has been well tilled, sends forth the plants that are most congenial to its soil, and though it be of no great value, give me the spontaneous and generous growth of the weed, which proves the depth of the loam, rather than a stinted imitation of that which cultivation may, no doubt, render more useful if not more grateful."

The allusion to his lost son caused another cloud to pass athwart the brow of the Genoese.

"Thou seest, Adelheid," he continued, after a pause—"for Adelheid will I call thee, in virtue of a second father's rights—that we are making our folly respectable, at least to ourselves—Master Patron, thou hast a well-charged bark!"

"Thanks to your two honors," answered Baptiste, who stood at the helm, near the group of principal passengers. "These windfalls come rarely to the poor, and we must make much of such as offer. The games at Vévey have called every craft on the Leman to the upper end of the lake, and a little mother wit led me to trust to the last turn of the wheel, which, as you see, signor, has not come up a blank."

"Have many strangers passed by your city on their way to these sports?"

"Many hundreds, noble gentleman; and report speaks of thousands that are collecting at Vévey and in the neighboring villages. The country of Vaud has not had a richer harvest from her games this many a year."

"It is fortunate, Melchior, that the desire to witness these revels should have arisen in us at the same moment. The hope of at last obtaining certain tidings of thy welfare was the chief inducement that caused me to steal from Genoa, whither I am compelled to return forthwith. There is truly something providential in this meeting!"

"I so esteem it," returned the Baron de Willading; "though the hope of soon embracing thee was strongly alive in me. Thou art mistaken in fancying that curiosity or a wish to mingle with the multitude at Vévey has drawn me from my castle. Italy was in my eye, as it has long been in my heart."

"How!—Italy?"

"Nothing less. This fragile plant of the mountains has drooped of late in her native air, and skilful advisers have counselled the sunny side of the Alps as a shelter to revive her animation. I have promised Roger de Blonay to pass a night or two within his ancient walls, and then we are destined to seek the hospitality of the monks of St. Bernard. Like thee, I had hoped this unusual sortie from my hold might lead to intelligence touching the fortunes of one I have never ceased to love."

The Signor Grimaldi turned a more scrutinizing look toward the face of their female companion. Her gentle and winning beauty gave him pleasure; but, with his attention quickened by what had just fallen from her

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father, he traced, in silent pain, the signs of that early fading which threatened to include this last hope of his friend in the common fate of the family. Disease had not, however, set its seal on the sweet face of Adelheid in a manner to attract the notice of a common observer. The lessening of the bloom, the mournful character of a dove-like eye, and a look of thoughtfulness on a brow that he had ever known devoid of care and open as day with youthful ingenuousness, were the symptoms that first gave the alarm to her father, whose previous losses, and whose solitariness, as respects the ties of the world, had rendered him keenly alive to impressions of such a nature. The reflections excited by this examination brought painful recollections to all, and it was long before the discourse was renewed.

In the meantime, the Winkelried was not idle. As the vessel receded from the cover of the buildings and the hills, the force of the breeze was felt, and her speed became quickened in proportion; though the watermen of her crew often studied the manner in which she dragged her way through the element with a shake of the head, that was intended to express their consciousness that too much had been required of the craft. The cupidity of Baptiste had indeed charged his good bark to the uttermost. The water was nearly on a line with the low stern, and when the bark had reached a part of the lake where the waves were rolling with some force, it was found that the vast weight was too much to be lifted by the feeble and broken efforts of these miniature seas. The consequences were, however, more vexatious than alarming. A few wet feet among the less quiet of the passengers, with an occasional slapping of a sheet of water against the gangways, and a consequent drift of spray across the pile of human heads in the centre of the bark, were all the immediate personal inconveniences. Still unjustifiable greediness of gain had tempted the patron to commit the unseaman-like fault of overloading his vessel. The decrease of speed was another and a graver consequence of his cupidity, since it might prevent their arrival in port before the breeze had expended itself.

The lake of Geneva lies nearly in the form of a crescent, stretching from the southwest toward the northeast. Its northern, or the Swiss shore, is chiefly what is called, in the language of the country, a *côte*, or a declivity that admits of cultivation; and, with few exceptions, it has been, since the earliest periods of history, planted with the generous vine. Here the Romans had many stations and posts, vestiges of which are still visible. The confusion and the mixture of interests that succeeded the fall of the empire, gave rise in the middle ages to various baronial castles, ecclesiastical towns, and towers of defence, which still stand on the margin of this beautiful sheet of water, or ornament the eminences a little inland. At the time of which we write, the whole coast of the Leman, if so imposing a word may be applied to the shores of so small a body of water, was in the possession of the three several states of Geneva, Savoy, and Berne. The first consisted of a mere fragment of territory at the western, or lower horn of the crescent; the second occupied nearly the whole of the southern side of the sheet, or the cavity of the half moon; while the latter was mistress of the whole of the convex border, and of the eastern horn. The shores of Savoy are composed, with immaterial exceptions, of advanced spurs of the high Alps, among which towers Mont Blanc, like a sovereign seated in majesty in the midst of a brilliant court, the rocks frequently rising from the water's edge in perpendicular masses. None of the lakes of this remarkable region possess a greater variety of scenery than that of Geneva, which changes from the smiling aspect of fertility and cultivation, at its lower extremity, to the sublimity of a savage and sublime nature at its upper. Vévey, the haven for which the Winkelried was bound, lies at the distance of three leagues from the head of the lake, or the point where it receives the Rhone; and Geneva, the port from which the reader has just seen her take her departure, is divided by that river as it glances out of the blue basin of the Leman again, to traverse the fertile fields of France, on its hurried course toward the distant Mediterranean.

It is well known that the currents of air, on all bodies of water that lie amid high and broken mountains, are uncertain both as to their direction and their force. This was

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the difficulty which had most disturbed Baptiste during the delay of the bark, for the experienced waterman well knew it required the first and the freest effort of the wind to "drive the breeze home," as it is called by seamen, against the opposing currents that frequently descend from the mountains which surrounded his port. In addition to this difficulty, the shape of the lake was another reason why the winds rarely blow in the same direction over the whole of its surface at the same time. Strong and continued gales commonly force themselves down into the deep basin, and push their way against all resistance, into every crevice of the rocks; but a power less than this, rarely succeeds in favoring the bark with the same breeze from the entrance to the outlet of the Rhone.

As a consequence of these peculiarities, the passengers of the Winkelried had early evidence that they had trifled too long with the fickle air. The breeze carried them up abreast of Lausanne in good season, but here the influence of the mountains began to impair its force, and by the time the sun had a little fallen toward the long, dark, even line of the Jura, the good vessel was driven to the usual expedients of jibbing and hauling-in of sheets.

Baptiste had only to blame his own cupidity for this disappointment; and the consciousness that, had he complied with the engagement, made on the previous evening with the mass of the passengers, to depart with the dawn, he should now have been in a situation to profit by any turn of fortune that was likely to arise from the multitude of strangers who were in Vévey, rendered him moody. As is usual with the headstrong and the selfish when they possess the power, others were made to pay for the fault that he alone committed. His men were vexed with contradictory and useless orders; the inferior passengers were accused of constant neglect of his instructions, a fault which he did not hesitate to affirm had caused the bark to sail less swiftly than usual, and he no longer even answered the occasional questions of those for whom he felt habitual deference, with his former respect and readiness.

CHAPTER IV.

"Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine."—*Macbeth.*

Baffling and light airs kept the Winkelried a long time nearly stationary, and it was only by paying the greatest attention to trimming the sails and to all the little minutiæ of the waterman's art, that the vessel was worked into the eastern horn of the crescent, as the sun touched the hazy line of the Jura. Here the wind failed entirely, the surface of the lake becoming as glassy and smooth as a mirror, and further motion, for the time at least, was quite out of the question. The crew, perceiving the hopelessness of their exertions, and fatigued with the previous toil, threw themselves among the boxes and bales, and endeavored to catch a little sleep, in anticipation of the north breeze, which, at this season of the year, usually blew from the shores of Vaud within an hour or two of the disappearance of the sun.

The deck of the bark was now left to the undisputed possession of her passengers. The day had latterly been sultry for the season, the even water having cast back the hot rays in fierce reflection, and, as evening drew on, a refreshing coolness came to relieve the densely packed and scorching travellers. The effect of such a change was like that which would have been observed among a flock of heavily fleeced sheep, which, after gasping for breath beneath trees and hedges during the time of the sun's power, are seen scattering over their pastures to feed, or to play their antics, as a grateful shade succeeds to cool their panting sides.

Baptiste, as is but too apt to be the case with men possessed with brief authority, during the day had mercilessly played the tyrant with all the passengers that were beneath the privileged degrees, more than once threatening to come to extremities with several who had betrayed restlessness under the restraint and suffering of their unaccustomed situation. Perhaps there is no man who feels less for the complaints of the novice than your weather-beaten and hardened mariner; for, familiarized to the suffering and confinement of a vessel, and

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at liberty himself to seek relief in his duties and avocations, he can scarcely enter into the privations and embarrassments of those to whom all is so new and painful. But, in the patron of the Winkelried, there existed a natural indifference to the grievances of others, and a narrow selfishness of disposition, in aid of the opinions which had been formed by a life of hardship and exposure. He considered the vulgar passenger as so much troublesome freight, which, while it brought the advantage of a higher remuneration than the same cubic measurement of inanimate matter, had the unpleasant drawback of volition and motion. With this general tendency to bully and intimidate, the wary patron had, however, made a silent exception in favor of the Italian, who has introduced himself to the reader by the ill-omened name of Il Maledetto, or the accused. This formidable personage had enjoyed a perfect immunity from the effects of Baptiste's tyranny, which he had been able to establish by a very simple and quiet process. Instead of cowering at the fierce glance, of recoiling at the rude remonstrances of the churlish patron, he had chosen his time, when the latter was in one of his hottest ebullitions of anger, and when maledictions and menaces flowed out of his mouth in torrents, coolly to place himself on the very spot that the other had proscribed, where he maintained his ground with a quietness and composure which it might have been difficult to say was more to be imputed to extreme ignorance, or to immeasurable contempt. At least, so reasoned the spectators; some thinking that the stranger meant to bring affairs to a speedy issue by braving the patron's fury, and others charitably inferring that he knew no better. But thus did not Baptiste reason himself. He saw by the calm eye and resolute demeanor of his passenger that he himself, his pretended professional difficulties, his captiousness, and his threats were alike despised; and he shrank from collision with such a spirit precisely on the principle that the intimidated among the rest of the travellers shrank from a contest with his own. From this moment Il Maledetto, or, as he was called by Baptiste himself, who it would appear had some knowledge of his person, Maso, became as completely the master of his own movements, as if he had been one of the more honored in the stern of the bark, or even her patron. He did not abuse his advantage, however, rarely quitting the indicated station near his own effects, where he had been mainly content to repose in listless indolence like the others, dozing away the minutes.

But the scene was now altogether changed. The instant the wrangling, discontented, and unhappy, because disappointed, patron confessed his inability to reach his port before the coming of the expected night-breeze, and threw himself on a bale to conceal his dissatisfaction in sleep, head arose after head from among the pile of freight, and body after body followed the nobler member, until the whole mass was alive with human beings. The invigorating coolness, the tranquil hour, the prospect of a safe if not a speedy arrival, and the relief from excessive weariness, produced a sudden and agreeable reaction in the feelings of all. Even the Baron de Willading and his friends, who had shared in none of the especial privations just named, joined in the general exhibition of satisfaction and good-will, rather aiding by their smiles and affability, than restraining by their presence, the whims and jokes of the different individuals among the motley group of their nameless companions.

The aspect and position of the bark, as well as the prospects of those on board as they were connected with their arrival, now deserve to be more particularly mentioned. The manner in which the vessel was loaded to the water's edge has already been more than once alluded to. The whole of the centre of the broad deck, a portion of the Winkelried which, owing to the overhanging gangways, possessed, in common with all the similar craft of the Leman, a greater width than is usual in vessels of the same tonnage elsewhere, was so cumbered with freight as barely to leave a passage to the crew, forward and aft, by stepping among the boxes and bales that were piled much higher than their own heads. A little vacant space was left near the stern, in which it was possible for the party who occupied that part of the deck to move, though in sufficiently straitened limits, while the huge tiller played in its semicircle behind. At the other extremity, as is

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absolutely necessary in all navigation, the forecastle was reasonably clear, though even this important part of the deck was bristling with the flukes of no less than nine anchors that lay in a row across its breadth, the wild roadsteads of this end of the lake rendering such a provision of ground-tackle absolutely indispensable to the safety of every craft that ventured into its eastern horn. The effect of the whole, seen as it was in a state of absolute rest, was to give to the Winkelried the appearance of a small mound in the midst of the water, that was crowded with human beings, and seemingly so incorporated with the element on which it floated as to grow out of its bosom; an image that the fancy was not slow to form, aided as it was by the reflection of the mass that the unruffled lake threw back from its mirror-like face, as perfectly formed, as unwieldy, and nearly as distinct as the original. To this picture of a motionless rock, or island, the spars, sails, and high, pointed beak, however, formed especial exceptions. The yards hung, as seamen term it, a-cockbill, or in such negligent and picturesque positions as an artist would most love to draw, while the drapery of the canvas was suspended in graceful and spotless festoons, as it had fallen by chance, or been cast carelessly from the hands of the boatmen. The beak, or prow, rose in its sharp gallant stem, resembling the stately neck of a swan, lightly swerving from its direction, or inclining in a nearly imperceptible sweep, as the hull yielded to the secret influence of the varying currents.

When the teeming pile of freight, therefore, began so freely to bring forth, and traveller after traveller left his pallet, there was no great space found in which they could stretch their wearied limbs, or seek the change they needed. But suffering is a good preparative for pleasure, and there is no sweetener of liberty like previous confinement. Baptiste was no sooner heard to snore than the whole hummock of cargo was garnished with upright bodies and stretching arms and legs, as mice are known to steal from their holes during the slumbers of their mortal enemy, the cat.

The reader has been made sufficiently acquainted with the moral composition of the Winkelried's living freight, in the opening chapter. As it had undergone no other alteration than that produced by lassitude, he is already prepared, therefore, to renew his communications with its different members, all of whom were well disposed to show off in their respective characters, the moment they were favored with an opportunity. The mercurial Pippo, as he had been the most difficult to restrain during the day, was the first to steal from his lair, now that the Argus-like eyes of Baptiste permitted the freedom, and the exhilarating coolness of the sunset invited action. His success emboldened others, and ere long, the buffoon had an admiring audience around him, that was well disposed to laugh at his witticisms, and to applaud all his practical jokes. Gaining courage as he proceeded, the buffoon gradually went from liberty to liberty, until he was at length triumphantly established on what might be termed an advanced spur of the mountain formed by the tubs of Nicklaus Wagner, in the regular exercise of his art; while a crowd of amused and gaping spectators blustered about him, peopling every eminence of the height, and even invading the more privileged deck in their eagerness to see and to admire.

Though frequently reduced by adverse fortune to the lowest shifts of his calling, such as the horse-play of Policinello, and the imitation of uncouth sounds, that resembled nothing either in heaven or earth, Pippo was a clever knave in his way, and was quite equal to a display of the higher branches of his art, whenever chance gave him an audience capable of estimating his qualities. On the present occasion he was obliged to address himself both to the polished and to the unpolished; for the proximity of their position, as well as a good-natured readiness to lend themselves to fooleries that were so agreeable to most around them, had brought the more gentle portion of the passengers within the influence of his wit.

"And now, illustrissimi signori," continued the wily juggler, after having drawn a burst of applause by one of his happiest hits in a sleight-of-hand exhibition, "I come to the most imposing and the most mysterious part of my knowledge—that of looking into the future and of foretelling events. If there are any among you who would wish to know

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how long they are to eat the bread of toil, let them come to me; if there is a youth who wishes to learn whether the heart of his mistress is made of flesh or of stone— a maiden that would see into a youth's faith and constancy while her long eyelashes cover her sight like a modest silken veil—or a noble, that would fain have an insight into the movements of his rivals at court or council, let them all put their questions to Pippo, who has an answer ready for each, and an answer so real that the most expert among the listeners will be ready to swear that a lie from his mouth is worth more than truth from that of another man."

"He that would gain credit for knowledge of the future," gravely observed the Signor Grimaldi, who had listened to his countryman's voluble eulogium on his own merits with a good-natured laugh, "had best commence by showing his familiarity with the past. Who and what is he that speaks to thee, as a specimen of thy skill in soothsaying?"

"His eccellenza is more than he seems, less than he deserves to be, and as much as any present. He hath an old and a prized friend at his elbow; hath come because it was his pleasure, to witness the games at Vévey—will depart for the same reason, when they are over, and will seek his home at his leisure—not like a fox stealing into his hole, but as the stately ship sails gallantly, and by the light of the sun, into her haven."

"This will never do, Pippo," returned the good-humored old noble; "at need I might equal this myself. Thou shouldst relate that which is less probable, while it is more true."

"Signor, we prophets like to sleep in whole skins. If it be your eccellenza's pleasure and that of your noble company to listen to the truly wonderful, I will tell some of these honest people matters touching their own interests that they do not know themselves, and yet it shall be as clear to everybody else as the sun in the heavens at noonday."

"Thou wilt probably tell them their faults?"

"Your eccellenza has a right to my place, for no prophet could have better divined my intention," answered the laughing knave. "Come nearer, friend," he added, beckoning to the Bernois; "thou art Nicklaus Wagner, a fat peasant of the great canton, and a warm husbandman, that fancies he has a title to the respect of all he meets, because some one among his fathers bought a right in the bürgerschaft. Thou hast a large stake in the Winkelried, and art at this moment thinking what punishment is good enough for an impudent soothsayer who dares dive so unceremoniously into the secrets of so warm a citizen, while all around thee wish thy cheeses had never left the dairy, to the discomfort of our limbs and to the great detriment of the bark's speed."

This sally at the expense of Nicklaus drew a burst of merriment from the listeners; for the selfish spirit he had manifested throughout the day had won little favor with a majority of his fellow-travellers, who had all the generous propensities that are usually so abundant among those who have little or nothing to bestow, and who were by this time so well disposed to be merry that much less would have served to stimulate their mirth.

"Wert thou the owner of this good freight, friend, thou might find its presence less uncomfortable than thou now appearest to think," returned the literal peasant, who had no humor for raillery, and to whom a jest on the subject of property had that sort of irreverent character that popular opinion and holy sayings have attached to waste. "The cheeses are well enough where they find themselves; if thou dislikest their company thou hast the alternative of the water."

"A truce between us, worshipful burgher! and let our skirmish end in something that may be useful to both. Thou hast that which would be acceptable to me, and I have that which no owner of cheeses would refuse, did he know the means by which it might be come at honestly."

Nicklaus growled a few words of distrust and indifference, but it was plain that the ambiguous language of the juggler, as usual, had succeeded in awakening interest. With the affectation of a mind secretly conscious of its own infirmity, he pretended to be indifferent to what the other professed a readiness to reveal, while with the rapacity of a grasping spirit he betrayed a longing to know more.

"First I will tell thee," said Pippo, with a

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parade of good nature, "that thou deservest to remain in ignorance, as a punishment of thy pride and want of faith; but it is the failing of your prophet to let that be known which he ought to conceal. Thou flatterest thyself this is the fattest cargo of cheeses that will cross the Swiss waters this season, on their way to an Italian market? Shake not thy head. 'Tis useless to deny it to a man of my learning!"

"Nay, I know there are others as heavy, and, it may be, as good; but this has the advantage of being the first, a circumstance that is certain to command a price."

"Such is the blindness of one that nature sent on earth to deal in cheeses!" The Herr von Willading and his friends smiled among themselves at the cool impudence of the mountebank—"Thou fanciest it is so; and at this moment a heavily laden bark is driven before a favorable gale, near the upper end of the lake of the four cantons, while a long line of mules is waiting at Flüellen to bear its freight by the paths of the St. Gothard to Milano, and other rich markets of the south. In virtue of my secret power, I see that, in despite of all thy cravings, it will arrive before thine."

Nicklaus fidgeted, for the graphic particularity of Pippo almost led him to believe the augury might be true.

"Had this bark sailed according to our covenant," he said, with a simplicity that betrayed his uneasiness, "the beasts bespoken by me would now be loading at Villeneuve; and, if there be justice in Vaud, I shall hold Baptiste responsible for any disadvantage that may come of the neglect."

"Luckily, the generous Baptiste is asleep," returned Pippo, "or we might hear objections to this scheme. But, signori, I see you are satisfied with this insight into the character of the warm peasant of Berne, who, to say truth, has not much to conceal from us, and I will turn my searching looks into the soul of this pious pilgrim, the reverend Conrado, whose unction may well go near to be a leaven sufficient to lighten all in the bark of their burdens of backslidings. Thou carriest the penitence and prayers of many sinners, besides some merchandise of this nature of thine own."

"I am bound to Loretto, with the mental offerings of certain Christians, who are too much occupied with their daily concerns to make the journey in person," answered the pilgrim, who never absolutely threw aside his professional character, though he cared in general so little about his hypocrisy being known. "I am poor and humble of appearance, but I have seen miracles in my day!"

"If any trust valuable offerings to thy keeping thou art a living miracle in thine own person! I can foresee that thou wilt bear naught else beside aves."

"Nay, I pretend to deal in little more. The rich and great, they that send vessels of gold and rich dresses to Our Lady, employ their own favorite messengers; I am but the bearer of prayer and the substitute for the penitent. The sufferings that I undergo in the flesh are passed to the credit of my employers, who get the benefit of my aches and pains. I pretend to be no more than their go-between, as yonder mariner has so lately called me."

Pippo turned suddenly, following the direction of the other's eye, and cast a glance at the self-styled Il Maledetto. This individual, of all the common herd, had alone forborne to join the gaping and amused crowd near the juggler. His forbearance or want of curiosity, had left him in the quiet possession of the little platform that was made by the stowage of the boxes, and he now stood on the summit of the pile, conspicuous by his situation and mien, the latter being remarkable for its unmoved calmness, heightened by the understanding manner that is so peculiar to a seaman when afloat.

"Wilt thou have the history of thy coming perils, friend mariner?" cried the mercurial mountebank; "a journal of thy future risks and tempests to amuse you in this calm? Such a picture of sea-monsters and of coral that grows in the ocean's caverns, where mariners sleep, that shall give thee the nightmare for months, and cause thee to dream of wrecks and bleached bones for the rest of thy life? Thou hast only to wish it, to have the adventures of thy next voyage laid before thee, like a map."

"Thou wouldst gain more credit with me, as one cunning in thy art, by giving the history of the last."

"The request is reasonable, and thou shalt

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have it; for I love the bold adventurer that trusts himself hardily upon the great deep," answered the unabashed Pippo. "My first lessons in necromancy were received on the mole of Napoli, amid burly Inglesi, straight-nosed Greeks, swarthy Sicilians, and Maltese with spirits as fine as the gold of their own chains. This was the school in which I learned to know my art, and an apt scholar I proved in all that touches the philosophy and humanity of my craft. Signor, your palm?"

Maso spread his sinewy hand in the direction of the juggler, without descending from his elevation, and in a way to show that, while he would not balk the common humor, he was superior to the gaping wonder and childish credulity of most of those who watched the result. Pippo affected to stretch out his neck, in order to study the hard and dark lines, and then he resumed his revelations, like one perfectly satisfied with what he had discovered.

"The hand is masculine, and has been familiar with many friends in time. It hath dealt with steel, and cordage, and saltpetre, and most of all with gold. Signori, the true seat of a man's digestion lies in the palm of his hand; if that is free to give and to receive, he will never have a costive conscience, for of all damnable inconveniences that afflict mortals, that of a conscience that will neither give up nor take is the heaviest curse. Let a man have as much sagacity as shall make him a cardinal, if it get entangled in the meshes of one of your unyielding consciences, ye shall see him a mendicant brother to his dying day; let him be born a prince, with a close-ribbed opinion of this sort, and he had better have been born a beggar, for his reign will be like a river from which the current sets outward, without any return. No, my friends, a palm like this of Maso's is a favorable sign, since it hinges on a pliant will, that will open and shut like a well-formed eye, or the jacket of a shell-fish, as its owner's pleasure. Thou hast drawn near to many ports before this of Vévey, after the sun has fallen low, Signor Maso!"

"In that I have taken a seaman's chances, which depend more on the winds than on his own wishes."

"Thou esteemest the bottom of the craft in which thou art required to set sail as far more important than her ancient. Thou hast an eye for a keel, but none for color; unless, indeed, as it may happen to be convenient to seem that thou art not."

"Nay, Master Soothsayer, I suspect thee to be an officer of some of the Holy Brotherhoods, sent in this guise to question us poor travellers to our ruin!" answered Maso. "I am, what thou seest, but a poor mariner that hath no better bark under him than this of Baptiste, and on a sea no larger than a Swiss lake."

"Shrewdly observed," said Pippo, winking to those near him, though he so little liked the eye and bearing of the other that he was not sorry to turn to some new subject. "But what matters it, signori, to be speaking of the qualities of men! We are alike honorable, merciful, more disposed to help others than to help ourselves, and so little given to selfishness that nature has been obliged to supply every mother's son of us with a sort of goad, that shall be constantly pricking us on to look after our own interests. Here are animals whose dispositions are less understood, and we will bestow a useful minute in examining their qualities. Reverend Augustine, this mastiff of thine is named Uberto?"

"He is known by that appellation throughout the cantons and their allies. The fame of the dog reaches even to Turin, and to most of the towns in the plain of Lombardy."

"Now, signori, you perceive that this is but a secondary creature in the scale of animals. Do him good, and he will be grateful; do him harm, and he will forgive. Feed him, and he is satisfied. He will travel the paths of the St. Bernard night and day to do credit to his training, and when the toil is ended, all he asks is just as much meat as will keep the breath within his ribs. Had Heaven given Uberto a conscience and greater wit, the first might have shown him the impiety of working for travellers on holy days and festas, while the latter would be apt to say he was a fool for troubling himself about the safety of others at all."

"And yet his masters, the good Augustines themselves, do not hold so selfish a creed!" observed Adelheid.

"Ah! they have heaven in view! I cry the reverend Augustine's pardon—but, lady,

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the difference is in the length of the calculation. Woe's me, brethren; I would that my parents had educated me for a bishop, or a viceroy, or some other modest employment, that this learned craft of mine might have ...en into better hands! Ye would lose in instruction, but I should be removed from the giddy heights of ambition, and die at last with some hopes of being a saint. Fair lady, thou travellest on a bootless errand, if I know the reason that tempts thee to cross the Alps at this late season of the year."

This sudden address caused both Adelheid and her father to start, for, in despite of pride and the force of reason, it is seldom that we can completely redeem our opinions from the shackles of superstition, and that dread of the unseen future which appears to have been entailed upon our nature, as a ceaseless monitor of the eternal state of being to which all are hastening, with steps so noiseless and yet so sure. The countenance of the maiden changed, and she turned a quick, involuntary glance at her anxious parent, as if to note the effect of this rude announcement on him before she answered.

"I go in quest of the blessing health," she said, "and I should be sorry to think thy prognostic likely to be realized. With youth, a good constitution, and tender friends on my side, there is reason to think thou mayest, in this at least, prove a false prophet."

"Lady, hast thou hope?"

Pippo ventured this question as he had adventured his opinion; that is to say, recklessly, pretendingly, and with great indifference to any effect it might have, except as it was likely to establish his reputation with the crowd. Still, it would seem that, by one of those singular coincidences that are hourly occurring in real life, he had unwittingly touched a sensitive chord in the system of his fair fellow-traveller. Her eyes sank to the deck at this abrupt question, the color again stole to her polished temples, and the least practised in the emotions of the sex might have detected painful embarrassment in her mien. She was, however, spared the awkwardness of a reply, by the unexpected and prompt interference of Maso.

"Hope is the last of our friends to prove recreant," said this mariner, "else would the cases of many in company be bad enough, thine own included, Pippo; for, judging by the outward signs, the Swabian campaign has not been rich in spoils."

"Providence has ordered the harvest of wit much as it has ordered the harvests of the field," returned the juggler, who felt the sarcasm of the other's remark with all the poignancy that it could derive from truth; since, to expose his real situation, he was absolutely indebted to an extraordinary access of generosity in Baptiste for his very passage across the Leman. "One year, thou shalt find the vineyard dripping liquors precious as diamonds, while in the next barrenness shall make it its seat. To-day the peasant will complain that poverty prevents him from building the covering necessary to house his crops, while to-morrow he will be heard groaning over empty garners. Abundance and famine travel the earth hard upon each other's heels, and it is not surprising that he who lives by his wits should sometimes fail of his harvest, as well as he who lives by his hands."

"If constant custom can secure success, the pious Conrad should be prosperous," answered Maso, "for, of all machinery, that of sin is the least seldom idle. His trade at least can never fail for want of employers."

"Thou hast it, Signor Maso; and it is for this especial reason that I wish my parents had educated me for a bishopric. He that is charged with reproving his fellow-creatures for their vices need never know an idle hour."

"Thou dost not understand what thou sayest," put in Conrad; "love for the saints has much fallen away since my youth, and where there is one Christian ready now to bestow his silver, in order to get the blessing of some favorite shrine, there were then ten. I have heard the elders of us pilgrims say that fifty years since 'twas a pleasure to bear the sins of a whole parish, for ours is a business in which the load does not so much depend on the amount as the quality; and in their time there were willing offerings, frank confessions, and generous consideration for those who undertook the toil."

"In such a trade, the less thou hast to answer for in behalf of others, the more will pass to thy credit on the score of thine own

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backslidings," pithily remarked Nicklaus Wagner, who was a sturdy Protestant, and apt enough at levelling these side-hits at those who professed a faith obnoxious to the attacks of all who dissented from the opinions and the spiritual domination of Rome.

But Conrad was a rare specimen of what may be effected by training and well-rooted prejudices. In presenting this man to the mind of the reader, we have no intention to impugn the doctrines of the particular church to which he belonged, but simply to show, as the truth will fully warrant, to what a pass of flagrant and impudent pretension the qualities of man, unbridled by the wholesome corrective of a sound and healthful opinion, were capable of conducting abuses on the most solemn and gravest subjects. In that age usages prevailed, and were so familiar to the minds of the actors as to excite neither reflection nor comment, which would now lead to revolutions, and a general rising in defence of principles which are held to be clear as the air we breathe. Though we entertain no doubt of the existence of that truth which pervades the universe, and to which all things tend, we think the world, in its practices, its theories, and its conventional standards of right and wrong, is in a condition of constant change, which it should be the business of the wise and good to favor, so long as care is had that the advantage is not bought by reaction of evil that shall more than prove its counterpoise. Conrad was one of the lowest class of those fungi that grow out of the decayed parts of the moral, as their more material types prove the rottenness of the vegetable world; and the probability of the truth of the portraiture is not to be loosely denied, without mature reflection on the similar anomalies that are yet to be found on every side of us, or without studying the history of the abuses which then disgraced Christianity, and which, in truth, became so intolerable in their character, and so hideous in their features, as to be the chief influencing cause to bring about their own annihilation.

Pippo, who had that useful tact which enables a man to measure his own estimation with others, was not slow to perceive that the more enlightened part of his audience began to tire of this pretending buffoonery. Resorting to a happy subterfuge, by means of one of his sleight-of-hand expedients, he succeeded in transferring the whole of that portion of the spectators who still found amusement in his jugglery to the other end of the vessel, where they established themselves among the anchors, ready as ever to swallow an ailment that seems to find an inextinguishable appetite for its reception among the vulgar. Here he continued his exhibition, now moralizing in the quaint and often in the pithy manner which renders the southern buffoon so much superior to his duller competitor of the north, and uttering a wild jumble of wholesome truths, loose morality, and witty innendoes, the latter of which never failed to extort roars of laughter from all but those who happened to be their luckless subjects.

Once or twice Baptiste raised his head, and stared about him with drowsy eyes, but, satisfied there was nothing to be done in the way of forcing the vessel ahead, he resumed his nap, without interfering in the pastime of those whom he had hitherto seemed to take pleasure in annoying. Left entirely to themselves, therefore, the crowd on the forecastle represented one of those every-day but profitable pictures of life which abound under our eyes, but which, though they are pregnant with instruction, are treated with the indifference that would seem to be the inevitable consequence of familiarity.

The crowded and overloaded bark might have been compared to the vessel of human life, which floats at all times, subject to the thousand accidents of a delicate and complicated machinery, the lake so smooth and alluring in its present tranquillity, but so capable of clashing its iron-bound coasts with fury, to a treacherous world, whose smile is almost always as dangerous as its frown; and, to complete the picture, the idle, laughing, thoughtless, and yet inflammable group that surrounded the buffoon, to the unaccountable medley of human sympathies, of sudden and fierce passions, of fun and frolic, so inexplicably mingled with the grossest egotism that enters into the heart of man: in a word, to so much that is beautiful and divine, with so much that would seem to be derived directly from the demons, a compound which composes this mysterious and dread state of being, and which we are taught, by reason

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and revelation, is only a preparation for another still more incomprehensible and wonderful.

CHAPTER V.

"How like a fawning publican he looks!"—*Shylock.*

THE change of the juggler's scene of action left the party in the stern of the barge in quiet possession of their portion of the vessel. Baptiste and his boatmen still slept among the boxes; Maso continued to pace his elevated platform above their heads; and the meek-looking stranger, whose entrance into the barge had drawn so many witticisms from Pippo, sat a little apart, silent, furtively observant, and retiring, in the identical spot he had occupied throughout the day. With these exceptions, the whole of the rest of the travellers were crowding around the person of the mountebank. Perhaps, we have not done well, however, in classing either of the two just named with the more common herd, for there were strong points of difference to distinguish both from most of their companions.

The exterior and the personal appointments of the unknown traveller, who had shrunk so sensitively before the hits of the Neapolitan, were greatly superior to those of any other in the bark beneath the degree of the gentle, not even excepting those of the warm peasant Nicklaus Wagner, the owner of so large a portion of the freight. There was a decency of air that commanded more respect than it was then usual to yield to the nameless, a quietness of demeanor that denoted reflection, and the habit of self-study and self-correction, together with a deference to others that was well adapted to gain friends. In the midst of the noisy, clamorous merriment of all around him, his restrained and rebuked manner had won upon the favor of the more privileged who had unavoidably noticed the difference, and had prepared the way to a more frank communication between the party of the noble, and one who, if not their equal in the usual points of worldly distinction, was greatly superior to those among whom he had been accidentally cast by the chances of his journey. Not so with Maso; he, apparently, had little in common with the unobtruding and silent being that sat so near his path, in the short turns he was making to and fro across the pile of freight. The mariner was much the younger, his years scarcely reaching thirty, while the head of the unknown traveller was already beginning to be sprinkled with gray. The walk, attitudes, and gestures of the former, were also those of a man confident of himself, a little addicted to be indifferent to others, and far more disposed to lead than to follow. These are qualities that it may be thought his present situation was scarcely suited to discover, but they had been made sufficiently apparent by the cool, calculating looks he threw, from time to time, at the manœuvres commanded by Baptiste, the expressive sneer with which he criticized his decisions, and a few biting remarks which had escaped him in the course of the day, and which had conveyed anything but compliments to the nautical skill of the patron and his fresh-water followers. Still there were signs of better stuff in this suspicious-looking person than are usually seen about men whose attire, pursuits, and situation, are so indicative of the world's pressing hard upon their principles, as happened to be the fact with this poor and unknown seaman. Though ill clad, and wearing about him the general tokens of a vagrant life, and that close connection with society that is usually taken as sufficient evidence of one's demerits, his countenance occasionally denoted thought, and, during the day, his eye had frequently wandered toward the group of his more intelligent fellow passengers, as if he found subjects of greater interest in their discourse, than in the rude pleasantries and practical jokes of those nearer his person.

The high bred are always courteous, except in cases in which presumption repels civility; for they who are accustomed to the privileges of station, think far less of their immunities than they, who, by being excluded from the fancied advantages, are apt to exaggerate superiority that a short experience would show becomes of very questionable value in the possession. Without the equitable provision of Providence, the laws of civilized society would become truly intolerable, for, if peace of mind, pleasure, and what is usually termed happiness, were the exclusive enjoyment of

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those who are rich and honored, there would, indeed, be so crying an injustice in their present ordinances as could not long withstand the united assaults of reason and justice. But, happily for the relief of the less gifted and the peace of the world, the fact is very different. Wealth has its peculiar woes; honors and privileges pall in the use; and, perhaps, as a rule, there is less of that regulated contentment, which forms the nearest approach to the condition of the blessed of which this unquiet state of being is susceptible, among those who are usually the most envied by their fellow creatures, than in any other of the numerous gradations into which the social scale has been divided. He who reads our present legend with the eyes that we could wish, will find in its moral the illustration of this truth; for, if it is our intention to delineate some of the wrongs that spring from the abuses of the privileged and powerful, we hope equally to show how completely they fall short of their object, by failing to confer that exclusive happiness which is the goal that all struggle to attain.

Neither the Baron de Willading, nor his noble friend, the Genoese, though educated in the opinions of their caste, and necessarily under the influence of the prejudices of the age, was addicted to the insolence of vulgar pride. Their habits had revolted at the coarseness of the majority of the travellers, and they were glad to be rid of them by the expedient of Pippo; but no sooner did the modest, decent air of the stranger who remained, make itself apparent, than they felt a desire to compensate him for the privations he had already undergone, by showing the civilities that their own rank rendered so easy and usually so grateful. With this view, then, as soon as the noisy *troupe* had departed, the Signor Grimaldi raised his beaver with that discreet and imposing politeness which equally attracts and repels, and addressing the solitary stranger, he invited him to descend, and stretch his legs on the part of the deck which had hitherto been considered exclusively devoted to the use of his own party. The other started, reddened, and looked like one who doubted whether he had heard aright.

"These noble gentlemen would be glad if you would come down, and take advantage of this opportunity to relieve your limbs," said the young Sigismund, raising his own athletic arm toward the stranger, to offer its assistance in helping him to reach the deck.

Still the unknown traveller hesitated, in the manner of one who fears he might overstep discretion by obtruding beyond the limits imposed by modesty. He glanced furtively upward at the place where Maso had posted himself, and muttered something of an intention to profit by its present nakedness.

"It has an occupant who does not seem disposed to admit another," said Sigismund, smiling; "your mariner has a self-possession when afloat, that usually gives him the same superiority that the well-armed swasher has among the timid in the street. You would do well, then, to accept the offer of the noble Genoese."

The stranger, who had once or twice been called rather ostentatiously by Baptiste the Herr Müller, during the day, as if the patron were disposed to let his hearers know that he had those who at least bore creditable names, even among his ordinary passengers, no longer delayed. He came down from his seat, and moved about the deck, in his usual quiet, subdued manner, but in a way to show that he found a very sensible and grateful relief in being permitted to make the change. Sigismund was rewarded for this act of good nature by a smile from Adelheid, who thought his warm interference in behalf of one, seemingly so much his inferior, did no discredit to his rank. It is possible that the youthful soldier had some secret sentiment of the advantage he derived from his kind interest in the stranger, for his brow flushed, and he looked more satisfied with himself, after this little office of humanity had been performed.

"You are better among us here," the Baron kindly observed, when the Herr Müller was fairly established in his new situation, "than among the freight of the honest Nicklaus Wagner, who, Heaven help the worthy peasant! has loaded us fairly to the water's edge with the notable industry of his dairy people. I like to witness the prosperity of our burghers, but it would have been better for us travellers, at least, had there been less of the wealth of honest Nicklaus in our company. Are you of Berne, or of Zurich?"

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"Of Berne, Herr Baron."

"I might have guessed that, by finding you on the Genfer See, instead of on the Wallenstätter. There are many of the Müllers in the Emmen Thal?"

"The Herr is right; the name is frequent, both in that valley, and in Entlibuch."

"It is a frequent appellation among us of the Teutonic stock. I had many Müllers in my company, Gaetano, when we lay before Mantua. I remember that two of the brave fellows were buried in the marshes of that low country; for the fever helped the enemy as much as the sword in the life-wasting campaign of the year we besieged the place."

The more observant Italian saw that the stranger was distressed by the personal nature of the conversation, and, while he quietly assented to his friend's remark, he took occasion to give it a new direction.

"You travel, like ourselves, signor, to get a look at these far-famed revels of the Vévasians?"

"That and affairs have brought me into this honorable company," answered the Herr Müller, whom no kindness of tone, however, could win from his timid and subdued manner of speaking. "And thou, father," turning to the Augustine, "art journeying toward thy mountain residence, after a visit of love to the valleys and their people?"

The monk of St. Bernhard assented to the truth of this remark, explaining the manner in which his community were accustomed annually to appeal to the liberality of the generous in Switzerland, in behalf of an institution that was founded in the interest of humanity, without reference to distinction of faith.

"'Tis a blessed brotherhood," answered the Genoese, crossing himself, perhaps as much from habit as from devotion, "and the traveller need wish it well. I have never shared your hospitality, but all report speaks fairly of it, and the title of a brother of San Bernardo should prove a passport to the favor of every Christian."

"Signor," said Maso, stopping suddenly, and taking his part uninvited in the discourse, and yet in a way to avoid the appearance of an impertinent interference, "none know this better than I! A wanderer these many years, I have often seen the stony roof of the hospice with as much pleasure as I have ever beheld the entrance of my haven, when an adverse gale was pressing against my canvas. Honor and a rich *quête* to the clavier of the convent, therefore, for it is bringing succor to the poor and rest to the weary!"

As he uttered this opinion, Maso decorously raised his cap, and pursued his straitened walk with the industry of a caged tiger. It was so unusual for one of his condition to obtrude on the discourse of the fair and noble, that the party exchanged looks of surprise; but the Signor Grimaldi, more accustomed than most of his friends to the frank deportment and bold speech of mariners, from having dwelt long on the coast of the Mediterranean, felt disposed rather to humor than to repulse this disposition to talk.

"Thou art a Genoese, by thy dialect," he said, assuming as a matter of course the right to question one of years so much fewer, and of a condition so much inferior to his own.

"Signor," returned Maso, uncovering himself again, though his manner betrayed profound personal respect rather than the deference of the vulgar, "I was born in the city of palaces, though it was my fortune first to see the light beneath a humble roof. The poorest of us are proud of the splendor of Genova la Superba, even if its glory has come from our own groans."

The Signor Grimaldi frowned. But ashamed to permit himself to be disturbed by an allusion so vague, and perhaps so unpremeditated, and more especially coming as it did from so insignificant a source, his brow regained its expression of habitual composure.

An instant of reflection told him it would be in better taste to continue the conversation, than churlishly to cut it short for so light a cause.

"Thou art too young to have had much connection, either in advantage or in suffering," he rejoined, "with the erection of the gorgeous dwellings to which thou alludest."

"This is true, signor, except as one is better or worse for those who have gone before him. I am what I seem, more by the acts of others than by any faults of my own. I envy not the rich or great, however; for one that has seen as much of life as I, knows the difference between the gay colors of the

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garment, and that of the shrivelled and diseased skin it conceals. We make our feluccas glittering and fine with paint, when their timbers work the most, and when the treacherous planks are ready to let in the sea to drown us."

"Thou hast the philosophy of it, young man, and hast uttered a biting truth, for those who waste their prime in chasing a phantom. Thou hast well bethought thee of these matters, for, if content with thy lot, no palace of our city would make thee happier."

"*If*, signor, is a meaning word! Content is like the northern star—we seamen steer for it, while none can ever reach it!"

"Am I then deceived in thee, after all? Is thy seeming moderation only affected; and wouldst thou be the patron of the bark in which fortune hath made thee only a passenger?"

"And a bad fortune it hath proved," returned Maso, laughing. "We appear fated to pass the night in it, for, so far from seeing any signs of this land-breeze of which Baptiste has so confidently spoken, the air seems to have gone to sleep as well as the crew. Thou art accustomed to this climate, reverend Augustine; is it usual to see so deep a calm on the Leman at this late season?"

A question like this was well adapted to effect the speaker's wish to change the discourse, for it very naturally directed the attention of all present from a subject that was rather tolerated from idleness than interesting in itself, to the different natural phenomena by which they were surrounded. The sunset had now fairly passed, and the travellers were at the witching moment that precedes the final disappearance of the day. A calm so deep rested on the limpid lake, that it was not easy to distinguish the line which separated the two elements, in those places where the blue of the land was confounded with the well-known and peculiar color of the Leman.

The precise position of the Winkelried was near midway between the shores of Vaud and those of Savoy, though nearer to the first than to the last. Not another sail was visible on the whole of the watery expanse, with the exception of one that hung lazily from its yard, in a small bark that was pulling toward St. Gingoulph, bearing Savoyards returning to their homes from the other side of the lake, and which, in that delusive landscape, appeared to the eye to be within a stone's throw of the base of the mountain, though in truth still a weary row from the land.

Nature has spread her work on a scale so magnificent in this sublime region that ocular deceptions of this character abound, and it requires time and practice to judge of those measurements which have been rendered familiar in other scenes. In like manner to the bark under the rocks of Savoy, there lay another, a heavy-moulded boat, nearly in a line with Villeneuve, which seemed to float in the air instead of its proper element, and whose oars were seen to rise and fall beneath a high mound, that was rendered shapeless by refraction. This was a craft bearing hay from the meadows at the mouth of the Rhone to their proprietors in the villages of the Swiss coast. A few light boats were pulling about in front of the town of Vévey, and a forest of low masts and latine yards, seen in the hundred picturesque attitudes peculiar to the rig, crowded the wild anchorage that is termed its port.

An air-line drawn from St. Saphorin to Meillerie, would have passed between the spars of the Winkelried; her distance from her haven, consequently, a little exceeded a marine league. This space might readily have been conquered in an hour or two by means of the sweeps, but for the lumbered condition of the decks, which would have rendered their use difficult, and the unusual draught of the bark, which would have caused the exertion to be painful. As it has been seen, Baptiste preferred waiting for the arrival of the night breeze to having recourse to an expedient so toilsome and slow.

We have already said, that the point just described was at the place where the Leman fairly enters its eastern horn, and where its shores possess their boldest and finest faces. On the side of Savoy, the coast was a sublime wall of rocks, here and there clothed with chestnuts, or indented with ravines and dark glens, and naked and wild along the whole line of their giddy summits. The villages so frequently mentioned, and which have become celebrated in these later times by the touch of genius, clung to the uneven declivi-

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ties, their lower dwellings laved by the lake, and their upper confounded by the rugged faces of the mountains. Beyond the limits of the Leman, the Alps, shot up in still higher pinnacles, occasionally showing one of those naked excrescences of granite, which rise for a thousand feet above the rest of the range—a trifle in the stupendous scale of the vast piles—and which, in the language of the country, are not inaptly termed Dents, from some fancied and plausible resemblance to human teeth. The verdant meadows of Noville, Aigle, and Bex, spread for leagues between these snow-capped barriers, so dwindled to the eye, however, that the spectator believed that to be a mere bottom, which was, in truth, a broad and fertile plain. Beyond these again, came the celebrated pass of St. Maurice, where the foaming Rhone dashed between two abutments of rock, as if anxious to effect its exit before the superincumbent mountains could come together, and shut it out forever from the inviting basin to which it was hurrying with a never-ceasing din. Behind this gorge, so celebrated as the key of the Valais, and even of the Alps in the time of the conquerors of the world, the background took a character of holy mystery. The shades of evening lay thick in that enormous glen, which was sufficiently large to contain a sovereign state, and the dark piles of mountains beyond were seen in a hazy, confused array. The setting was a gray boundary of rocks, on which fleecy clouds rested, as if tired with their long and high flight, and on which the parting day still lingered soft and lucid. One cone of dazzling white towered over all. It resembled a bright stepping-stone between heaven and earth, the heat of the hot sun falling innocuously against its sides, like the cold and pure breast of a virgin repelling those treacherous sentiments which prove the ruin of a shining and glorious innocence. Across the summit of this brilliant and cloudlike peak, which formed the most distant object in the view, ran the imaginary line that divided Italy from the regions of the north. Drawing nearer, and holding its course on the opposite shore, the eye embraced the range of rampart-like rocks that beetle over Villeneuve and Chillon, the latter a snow-white pile that seemed to rest partly on the land and partly on the water. On the vast débris of the mountains clustered the hamlets of Clarens, Montreux, Châtelard, and all those other places, since rendered so familiar to the reader of fiction by the vivid pen of Rousseau. Above the latter village, the whole of the savage and rocky range receded, leaving the lake-shore to vine-clad côtes that stretch away far to the west.

The scene, at all times alluring and grand, was now beheld under its most favorable auspices. The glare of day had deserted all that belonged to what might be termed the lower world, leaving in its stead the mild hues, the pleasing shadows, and the varying tints of twilight. It is true that a hundred châlets dotted the Alps, or those mountain pasturages which spread themselves a thousand fathoms above the Leman, on the foundation of rock that lay like a wall behind Montreux, shining still with the brightness of a bland even, but all below was fast catching the more sombre colors of the hour.

As the transition from day to night grew more palpable, the hamlets of Savoy became gray and hazy, the shades thickened around the bases of the mountains in a manner to render their forms indistinct and massive, and the milder glory of the scene was transferred to their summits. Seen by sunlight, these noble heights appeared a long range of naked granite, piled on a foundation of chesnut-covered hills, and buttressed by a few such salient spurs as are perhaps necessary to give variety and agreeable shadows to their acclivities. Their outlines were now drawn in those waving lines that the pencil of Raphael would have loved to sketch, dark, distinct, and appearing to be carved by art. The inflected and capricious edges of the rocks stood out in high relief against the background of pearly sky, resembling so much ebony wrought into every fantastic curvature that a wild and vivid fancy could conceive. Of all the wonderful and imposing sights of this extraordinary region, there is perhaps none in which there is so exquisite an admixture of the noble, the beautiful, and bewitching, as in this view of these natural arabesques of Savoy, seen at the solemn hour of twilight.

The Baron de Willading and his friends stood uncovered, in reverence of the sublime

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picture, which could only come from the hands of the Creator, and with unalloyed enjoyment of the bland tranquillity of the hour. Exclamations of pleasure had escaped them, as the exhibition advanced; for the view, like the shifting of scenes, was in a constant state of transition under the waning and changing light, and each had eagerly pointed out to the others some peculiar charm of the view. The sight was, in sooth, of a nature to preclude selfishness, no one catching a glimpse that he did not wish to be shared by all. Vévey, their journey, the fleeting minutes, and their disappointment, were all forgotten in the delight of witnessing this evening landscape, and the silence was broken only to express those feelings of delight which had long been uppermost in every bosom.

"I doff my beaver to thy Switzerland, friend Melchior," cried the Signor Grimaldi, after directing the attention of Adelheid to one of the peaks of Savoy, of which he had just remarked that it seemed a spot where an angel might love to light in his visits to the earth; "if thou hast much of this, we of Italy must look to it, or—by the shades of our fathers! we shall lose our reputation for natural beauty. How is it, young lady; hast thou many of these sunsets at Willading? or is this, after all, but an exception to what thou seest in common—as much a matter of astonishment to thyself, as—by San Francesco! good Marcellio, we must even own, it is to thee and to me."

Adelheid laughed at the old noble's good-humored rhapsody, but, much as she loved her native land, she could not pervert the truth by pretending that the sight was one to be often met with.

"If we have not this, however, we have our glaciers, our lakes, our cottages, our châlets, our Oberland, and such glens as have an eternal twilight of their own."

"Ay, my true-hearted and pretty Swiss, this is well for thee who wilt affirm that a drop of thy snow-water is worth a thousand limpid springs, or thou art not the true child of old Melchior de Willading; but it is lost on the cooler head of one who has seen other lands. Father Xavier, thou art a neutral, for thy dwelling is on the dividing ridge between the two countries, and I appeal to thee to know if these Helvetians have much of this quality of evening?"

The worthy monk met the question in the spirit with which it was asked, for the elasticity of the air, and the heavenly tranquillity and bewitching loveliness of the hour, well disposed him to be joyous.

"To maintain my character as an impartial judge," he answered, "I will say that each region has its own advantages. If Switzerland is the most wonderful and imposing, Italy is the most winning. The latter leaves more durable impressions, and is more fondly cherished. One strikes the senses, but the other slowly winds its way into the affections; and he who has freely vented his admiration in exclamations and epithets in one, will, in the end, want language to express all the secret longings, the fond recollections, the deep repinings, that he retains for the other."

"Fairly reasoned, friend Melchior, and like an able umpire leaving to each his share of consolation and vanity. Herr Müller, dost thou agree in a decision that gives thy much vaunted Switzerland so formidable a rival?"

"Signor," answered the meek traveller, "I see enough to admire and love in both, as is always the fact with that which God hath formed. This is a glorious world for the happy, and most might be so, could they summon courage to be innocent."

"The good Augustine will tell thee that this bears hard on certain points of theology, in which our common nature is treated with but indifferent respect. He that would continue innocent must struggle hard with his propensities."

The stranger was thoughtful, and Sigismund, whose eye had been earnestly riveted on his face, thought that it denoted more of peace than usual.

"Signor," rejoined the Herr Müller, when time had been given for reflection, "I believe it is good for us to know unhappiness. He that is permitted too much of his own will gets to be headstrong, and, like the overfed bullock, difficult to be managed; whereas, he who lives under the displeasure of his fellow-creatures is driven to look closely into himself, and comes at last to chasten his spirit by detecting its faults."

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"Art thou a follower of Calvin?" demanded the Augustine suddenly, surprised to hear opinions so healthful in the mouth of a dissenter from the true Church.

"Father, I belong neither to Rome nor to the religion of Geneva. I am an humble worshipper of God, and a believer in the blessed mediation of his holy Son."

"How! Where dost thou find such sentiments out of the pale of the Church?"

"In mine own heart. This is my temple, holy Augustine, and I never enter it without adoration for its Almighty founder. A cloud was over the roof of my father, at my birth, and I have not been permitted to mingle much with men; but the solitude of my life has driven me to study my own nature, which I hope has become none the worse for the examination. I know I am an unworthy and sinful man, and I hope others are as much better than I as their opinions of themselves would give reason to think."

The words of the Herr Müller, which lost none of their weight by his unaffected and quiet manner, excited curiosity. At first, most of the listeners were disposed to believe him one of those exaggerated spirits who exalt themselves by a pretended self-abasement, but his natural, quiet, and thoughtful deportment soon produced a more favorable opinion. There was a habit of reflection, a retreating inward look about his eye, that revealed the character of one long and truly accustomed to look more at himself than at others, and which wrought singularly in his behalf.

"We may not all have these flattering opinions of ourselves that thy words would seem to imply, Signor Müller," observed the Genoese, his tone changing to one better suited to soothe the feelings of the person addressed, while a shade insensibly stole over his own venerable features; "neither are all at peace that so seem. If it will be any consolation to thee to know that others are probably no more happy than thyself, I will add that I have known much pain, and that, too, amid circumstances which most would deem fortunate, and which, I fear, a great majority of mankind might be disposed to envy."

"I should be base indeed to seek consolation in such a source! I do not complain, signor, though my whole life has so passed that I can hardly say that I enjoy it. It is not easy to smile when we know that all frown upon us; else could I be content. As it is, I rather feel than repine."

"This is a most singular condition of the mind," whispered Adelheid to young Sigismund; for both had been deeply attentive listeners to the calm but strong language of the Herr Müller. The young man did not answer, and his fair companion saw with surprise, that he was pale, and with difficulty noticed her remark with a smile.

"The frowns of men, my son," observed the monk, "are usually reserved for those who offend their ordinances. The latter may not be always just, but there is a common sentiment which refuses to visit innocence, even in the narrow sense in which we understand the word, with undeserved displeasure."

The Herr Müller looked earnestly at the Augustine, and he seemed about to answer; but, checking the impulse, he bowed in submission. At the same time, a wild, painful smile gleamed on his face.

"I agree with thee, good canon," rejoined the simple-minded Baron; "we are much addicted to quarreling with the world, but, after all, when we look closely into the matter, it will commonly be found that the cause of our grievance exists in ourselves."

"Is there no Providence, father?" exclaimed Adelheid, a little reproachfully for one of her respectful habits and great filial tenderness. "Can we recall the dead to life, or keep those quick whom God is pleased to destroy?"

"Thou hast me, girl!—there is a truth in this that no bereaved parent can deny!"

This remark produced an embarrassed pause during which the Herr Müller gazed furtively about him, looking from the face of one to that of another, as if seeking for some countenance on which he could rely. But he turned away to the view of those hills which had been so curiously wrought by the finger of the Almighty, and seemed to lose himself in their contemplation.

"This is some spirit that has been bruised by early indiscretion," said the Signor Grimaldi, in a low voice, "and whose repentance is strangely mixed with resignation. I know not whether such a man is most to be envied

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or pitied. There is a fearful mixture of resignation and of suffering in his air."

"He has not the mien of a stabber or a knave," answered the Baron. "If he comes truly of the Müllers of the Emmen Thal, or even of those of Entelbuch, I should know something of his history. They are warm burghers, and mostly of fair name. It is true, that in my youth one of the family got out of favor with the councils, on account of some concealment of their lawful claims in the way of revenue, but the man made an atonement that was deemed sufficient in amount, and the matter was forgotten. It is not usual, Herr Müller, to meet citizens in our canton who go for neither Rome nor Calvin."

"It is not usual, mein herr, to meet men placed as I am. Neither Rome nor Calvin is sufficient for me;—I have need of God!"

"I fear thou hast taken life?"

The stranger bowed, and his face grew livid, seemingly with the intensity of his own thoughts. Melchior de Willading so disliked the expression, that he turned away his eyes in uneasiness. The other glanced frequently at the forward part of the bark, and he seemed struggling hard to speak, but, for some strong reason, unable to effect his purpose. Uncovering himself, at length, he said steadily, as if superior to shame, while he fully felt the import of his communication, but in a voice that was cautiously suppressed—

"I am Balthazar, of your canton, Herr Baron, and I pray your powerful succor, should those untamed spirits on the forecastle come to discover the truth. My blood hath been made to curdle to-day whilst listening to their heartless threats and terrible maledictions. Without this fear, I should have kept my secret,—for, God knows, I am not proud of my office!"

The general and sudden surprise, accompanied as it was by a common movement of aversion, induced the Signor Grimaldi to demand the reason.

"Thy name is not in much favor apparently, Herr Müller, or Herr Balthazar, whichever it is thy pleasure to be called," observed the Genoese, casting a quick glance around the circle. "There is some mystery in it, that to me needs explanation."

"Signor, I am the headsman of Berne."

Though long schooled in the polished habits of his high condition, which taught him ordinarily to repress strong emotions, the Signor Grimaldi could not conceal the start which this unexpected announcement produced, for he had not escaped the usual prejudices of men.

"Truly, we have been fortunate in our associate, Melchior," he said dryly, turning without ceremony from the man whose modest, quiet mien had lately interested him so much, but whose manner he now took to be assumed,—few pausing to investigate the motives of those who are condemned of opinion:—"here has been much excellent and useful morality thrown away upon a very unworthy subject!"

The Baron received the intelligence of the real name of their travelling companion with less feeling. He had been greatly puzzled to account for the singular language he had heard, and he found relief in so brief a solution of the difficulty.

"The pretended name, after all, then, is only a cloak to conceal the truth! I know the Müllers of the Emmen Thal so well, that I had great difficulty in fitting the character which the honest man gave of himself fairly upon any one of them all. But it is now clear enough, and doubtless Balthazar has no great reason to be proud of the turn which Fortune has played his family in making them executioners."

"Is the office hereditary?" demanded the Genoese quickly.

"It is. Thou knowest that we of Berne have great respect for ancient usages. He that is born to the Bürgerschaft will die in the exercise of his rights, and he that is born out of its venerable pale must be satisfied to live out of it, unless he has gold or favor. Our institutions are a hint from nature, which leaves men as they are created, preserving the order and harmony of society by venerable and well-defined laws, as is wise and necessary. In nature, he that is born strong remains strong, and he that has little force must be content with his feebleness."

The Signor Grimaldi looked like one who felt contrition.

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"Art thou, in truth, an hereditary execu-

tioner?" he asked, addressing Balthazar himself.

"Signor, I am; else would hand of mine have never taken life. 'Tis a hard duty to perform, even under the obligations and penalties of the law;—otherwise, it were accursed!"

"Thy fathers deemed it a privilege!"

"We suffer for their error; signor, the sins of the fathers, in our case, have indeed been visited on the children to the latest generations."

The countenance of the Genoese grew brighter, and his voice resumed the polished tones in which he usually spoke.

"Here has been some injustice of a certainty," he said, "or one of thy appearance would not be found in this cruel position. Depend on our authority to protect thee, should the danger thou seemest to apprehend really occur. Still the laws must be respected, though not always of the rigid impartiality that we might wish. Thou hast owned the imperfection of human nature, and it is not wonderful that its work should have flaws."

"I complain not now of the usage, which to me has become habit, but I dread the untamed fury of these ignorant and credulous men, who have taken a wild fancy that my presence might bring a curse upon the bark."

There are accidental situations which contain more healthful morals than can be drawn from a thousand ingenious and plausible homilies, and in which facts, in their naked simplicity, are far more eloquent than any meaning that can be conveyed by words. Such was the case with this meek and unexpected appeal of Balthazar. All who heard him saw his situation under very different colors from those in which it would have been regarded had the subject presented itself under ordinary circumstances. A common and painful sentiment attested strongly against the oppression that had given birth to his wrongs, and the good Melchior de Willading himself wondered how a case of this striking injustice could have arisen under the laws of Berne.

CHAPTER VI.

"Methought I saw a thousand fearful wrecks,
A thousand men that fishes gnawed upon;
Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,
Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,
All scattered in the bottom of the sea."

—*Richard III.*

THE flitting twilight was now on the wane, and the shades of evening were gathering fast over the deep basin of the lake. The figure of Maso, as he continued to pace his elevated platform, was drawn dark and distinct against the southern sky, in which some of the last rays of the sun still lingered, but objects on both shores were getting to be confounded with the shapeless masses of the mountains. Here and there a pale star peeped out, though most of the vault that stretched across the confined horizon was shut in by dusky clouds. A streak of dull, unnatural light was seen in the quarter which lay above the meadows of the Rhone, and nearly in a direction with the peak of Mont Blanc, which, though not visible from this portion of the Leman, was known to lie behind the ramparts of Savoy, like a monarch of the hills intrenched in his citadel of rocks and ice.

The change, the lateness of the hour, and the unpleasant reflections left by the short dialogue with Balthazar, produced a strong and common desire to see the end of a navigation that was beginning to be irksome. Those objects which had lately yielded so much and so pure a delight were now getting to be black and menacing, and the very sublimity of the scale on which Nature had here thrown together her elements was an additional source of uncertainty and alarm. Those fairy-like, softly delineated, natural arabesques, which had so lately been dwelt upon with rapture, were now converted into dreary crags that seemed to beetle above the helpless bark, giving unpleasant admonitions of the savage and inhospitable properties of their iron-bound bases, which were known to prove destructive to all who were cast against them while the elements were in disorder.

These changes in the character of the scene, which in some respects began to take the aspect of omens, were uneasily witnessed by all in the stern of the bark, though the careless laughter, the rude joke, and the noisy

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cries, which from time to time arose on the forecastle, sufficiently showed that the careless spirits it held were still indulging in the coarse enjoyments most suited to their habits. One individual, however, was seen stealing from the crowd, and establishing himself on the pile of freight, as if he had a mind more addicted to reflection, and less disposed to unmeaning revelry, than most of those whom he had just abandoned. This was the Westphalian student, who, wearied with amusements that were below the level of his acquirements, and suddenly struck with the imposing aspect of the lake and the mountains, had stolen apart to muse on his distant home and the beings most dear to him, under an excitement that suited those morbid sensibilities which he had long encouraged by a very subtle metaphysical system of philosophy. Until now, Maso had paced his lofty post with his eye fixed chiefly on the heavens in the direction of Mont Blanc, occasionally turning it, however, over the motionless bulk of the bark, but when the student placed himself across his path, he stopped and smiled at the abstracted air and riveted regard with which the youth gazed at a star.

"Art thou an astronomer, that thou lookest so closely at yonder shining world?" demanded Il Maledetto, with the superiority that the mariner afloat is wont successfully to assume over the unhappy wight of a landsman, who is very liable to admit his own impotency on the novel and dangerous element; —"the astrologer himself would not study it more deeply."

"This is the hour agreed upon between me and one that I love, to bring the unseen principle of our spirits together, by communing through its medium."

"I have heard of such means of intercourse. Dost see more than others by reason of such an assistant?"

"I see the object which is gazed upon, at this moment, by kind blue eyes that have often looked upon me in affection. When we are in a strange land, and in a fearful situation, such a communion has its pleasures!"

Maso laid his hand upon the shoulder of the student, which he pressed with the force of a vise.

"Thou art right," he said, moodily; "make the most of thy friendships, and if there are any that love thee, tighten the knot by all the means thou hast. None know the curse of being deserted in this selfish and cruel battle of interest better than I! Be not ashamed of thy star, but gaze at it till thy eye-strings crack. See the bright eyes of her that loves thee in its twinkling, her constancy in its lustre, and her melancholy in its sadness; lose not the happy moments, for there will soon be a dark curtain to shut out its view."

The Westphalian was struck with the singular energy as well as with the poetry of the mariner, and he distrusted the obvious allusion to the clouds, which were in fact fast covering the vault above their heads.

"Dost thou like the night?" he demanded, turning from his star, in doubt.

"It might be fairer. This is a wild region, and your cold Swiss lakes sometimes become too hot for the stoutest seaman's heart. Gaze at thy star, young man, while thou mayest, and bethink thee of the maiden thou lovest, and of all her kindness; we are on a crazy water, and pleasant thoughts should not be lightly thrown away."

Maso walked away, leaving the student alarmed, uneasy at he knew not what, and yet bent with childish eagerness on regarding the little luminary that occasionally was still seen wading among volumes of vapor. At this instant a shout of unmeaning, clamorous merriment arose on the forecastle.

Il Maledetto did not remain any longer on the pile, but abandoning it to the new occupant, he descended among the silent, thoughtful party who were in possession of the cleared space near the stern. It was now so dark that some little attention was necessary to distinguish faces, even at trifling distances. But by means of moving among these privileged persons with great coolness and seeming indifference, he soon succeeded in placing himself near the Genoese and the Augustine.

"Signor," he said in Italian, raising his cap to the former with the same marked respect as before, though it was evidently no easy matter to impress him with the deference that the obscure usually feel for the great—"this is likely to prove an unfortunate end to a voyage that began with so fair appearances. I could wish that your eccellenza,

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with all this noble and fair company, was safely landed in the town of Vévey."

"Dost thou mean that we have cause to fear more than delay?"

"Signor, the mariner's life is one of unequal chances: now he floats in a lazy calm, and presently he is tossed between heaven and earth, in a way to make the stoutest heart sick. My knowledge of these waters is not great, but there are signs making themselves seen in the sky, here above the peak that lies in the direction of Mont Blanc, that would trouble me, were this our own blue but treacherous Mediterranean."

"What thinkest thou of this, father; a long residence in the Alps must have given thee some insight into their storms?"

The Augustine had been grave and thoughtful from the moment that he ceased to converse with Balthazar. He, too, had been struck with the omens; and long used to study the changes of the weather, in a region where the elements sometimes work their will on a scale commensurate with the grandeur of the mountains, his thoughts had been anxiously recurring to the comforts and security of some of those hospitable roofs in the city to which they were bound, and which were always ready to receive the clavier of St. Bernard, in return for the services and self-denial of his brotherhood.

"With Maso, I could wish we were safely landed," answered the good canon; "the intense heat that a day like this creates in our valleys and on the lakes so weakens the substrata, or foundations of air, that the cold masses which collect around the glaciers sometimes descend like avalanches from their heights to fill the vacuum. The shock is fearful, even to those who meet it in the glens and among the rocks, but the plunge of such a column of air upon one of the lakes is certain to be terrible."

"And thou thinkest there is danger of one of these phenomena at present?"

"I know not: but I would we were housed! That unnatural light above, and this deep tranquillity below, which surpasses an ordinary calm, have already driven me to my aves."

"The reverend Augustine speaks like a bookman, and one who has passed his time up in his mountain-convent in study and reflection," rejoined Maso; "whereas, the reasons I have to offer savor more of the seaman's practice. A calm like this will be followed sooner or later by a commotion in the atmosphere. I like not the absence of the breeze from the land, on which Baptiste counted so surely, and, taking that symptom with the signs of yonder hot sky, I look soon to see this extraordinary quiet displaced by some violent struggle among the winds. Nettuno, too, my faithful dog, has given notice by the manner in which he snuffs the air, that we are not to pass the night in this motionless condition."

"I had hoped ere this to be quietly in our haven. What means yonder bright light? Is it a star in the heavens, or does it merely lie against the side of a huge mountain?"

"There shines old Roger de Blonay!" cried the Baron, heartily, "he knows of our being in the bark, and he has fired his beacon that we may steer by its light."

The conjecture seemed probable, for while the day remained, the castle of Blonay, seated on the bosom of the mountain that shelters Vévey to the northeast, had been plainly visible. It had been much admired, a pleasing object in a view that was so richly studded with hamlets and castles, and Adelheid had pointed it out to Sigismund as the immediate goal of her journey. The lord of Blonay being apprised of the intended visit, nothing was more probable than that he, an old and tried friend of Melchior de Willading's, should show this sign of impatience; partly in compliment to those whom he expected, and partly as a signal that might be really useful to those who navigated the Leman in a night that threatened so much murky obscurity.

The Signor Grimaldi rightly deemed the circumstances grave, and, calling to him his friend and Sigismund, he communicated the apprehensions of the monk and Maso. A braver man than Melchoir de Willading did not dwell in all Switzerland, but he did not hear the gloomy predictions of the Genoese without shaking in every limb.

"My poor enfeebled Adelheid!" he said, yielding to a father's tenderness, "what will become of this frail plant if exposed to a tempest in an unsheltered bark?"

"She will be with her father and with her

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father's friend," answered the maiden herself; for the narrow limits to which they were necessarily confined, and the sudden burst of feeling in the parent, which had rendered him incautious in pitching his voice, made her the mistress of the cause of alarm. "I have heard enough of what the good Father Xavier and this mariner have said, to know that we are in a situation that might be better; but am I not with tried friends? I know already what the Herr Sigismund can do in behalf of my life, and come what may, we have all a beneficent guardian in One, who will not leave any of us to perish without remembering we are his children."

"This girl shames us all," said the Signor Grimaldi; "but it is often thus with these fragile beings, who rise the firmest and noblest in moments when prouder man begins to despair. They put their trust in God, who is a prop to sustain even those who are feebler than our gentle Adelheid. But we will not exaggerate the causes of apprehension, which, after all, may pass away like many other threatening dangers, and leave us hours of felicitation and laughter in return for a few minutes of fright."

"Say, rather of thanksgiving," observed the clavier, "for the aspect of the heavens is getting to be fearfully solemn. Thou, who art a mariner—hast thou nothing to suggest?"

"We have the simple expedient of our sweeps, father; but, after neglecting their use so long, it is now too late to have recourse to them. We could not reach Vévey by such means, with this bark loaded to the water's edge, before the night would change, and the water once fairly in motion, they could not be used at all.

"But we have our sails," put in the Genoese, "they at least may do us good service when the wind shall come."

Maso shook his head, but he made no answer. After a brief pause, in which he seemed to study the heavens still more closely, he went to the spot where the patron yet lay lost in sleep, and shook him rudely. "Ho! Baptiste! awake! there is need here of thy counsel and of thy commands."

The drowsy owner of the bark rubbed his eyes, and slowly regained the use of his faculties.

"There is not a breath of wind," he muttered; "why didst awake me, Maso? One that hath led thy life should know that sleep is sweet to those who toil."

"Aye, 'tis their advantage over the pampered and idle. Look at the heavens, man, and let us know what thou thinkest of their appearance. Is there the stuff in thy Winkelried to ride out the storm like this we may have to encounter?"

"Thou talkest like a foolish quean that has been frightened by the fluttering of her own poultry. The lake was never more calm, or the bark in greater safety."

"Dost see yonder bright light; here, over the tower of thy Vévay church?"

"Aye, 'tis a gallant star! and a fair sign for the mariner."

"Fool, 'tis a hot flame in Roger de Blonay's beacon. They begin to see that we are in danger on the shore, and they cast out their signals to give us notice to be active. They think us bestirring ourselves like stout men, and those used to the water, while, in truth, we are as undisturbed as if the bark were a rock that might laugh at the Leman and its waves. The man is benumbed," continued Maso, turning away toward the anxious listeners; "he will not see that which is getting to be but too plain to all the others in his vessel."

Another idle and general laugh from the forecastle came to contradict this opinion of Maso's, and to prove how easy it is for the ignorant to exist in security, even on the brink of destruction. This was the moment when nature gave the first of those signals that were intelligent to vulgar capacities. The whole vault of the heavens was now veiled, with the exception of the spot so often named, which lay nearly above the brawling torrents of the Rhone. This fiery opening resembled a window admitting of fearful glimpses into the dreadful preparations that were making up among the higher peaks of the Alps. A flash of red, quivering light was emitted, and a distant rumbling rush, that was not thunder, but rather resembled the wheelings of a thousand squadrons into line, followed the flash. The forecastle was deserted to a man, and the hillock of freight was again darkly seen peopled with crouching human forms. Just then the bark,

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which had so long lain in a state of complete rest, slowly and heavily raised its bows, as if laboring under its great and unusual burden, while a sluggish swell passed beneath its entire length, lifting the whole mass, foot by foot, and passing away by the stern, to cast itself on the shores of Vaud.

"'Tis madness to waste the precious moments longer!" said Maso, hurriedly, on whom this plain and intelligible hint was not lost. "Signor, we must be bold and prompt, or we shall be overtaken by the tempest unprepared. I speak not for myself, since, by the aid of this faithful dog, and favored by my own arms, I have always the shore for a hope. But there is one in the bark I would wish to save, even at some hazard to myself. Baptiste is unnerved by fear, and we must act for ourselves or perish!"

"What wouldest thou?" demanded the Signor Grimaldi, "he that can proclaim the danger should have some expedient to divert it!"

"More timely exertion would have given us the resource of ordinary means, but, like those who die in their sins, we have foolishly wasted most precious minutes. We must lighten the bark, though it cost the whole of her freight."

A cry from Nicklaus Wagner announced that the spirit of avarice was still active as ever in his bosom! Even Baptiste, who had lost all his dogmatism and his disposition to command, under the imposing omens which had now made themselves apparent even to him, loudly joined in the protest against this waste of property. It is rare that any sudden and extreme proposal, like this of Maso's, meets with a quick echo in the judgments of those to whom the necessity is unexpectedly present. The danger did not seem sufficiently imminent to have recourse to an expedient so decided; and, though startled and aroused, the untamed spirits of those who crowded the menaced pile, were rather in a state of uneasiness, than of that fierce excitement to which they were so capable of being wrought, and which was in some degree necessary to induce even them, thriftless and destitute as they were, to be the agents of effecting so great a destruction of property. The project of the cool and calculating Maso would therefore have failed entirely, but for another wheeling of those airy squadrons, and a second wave which lifted the groaning bark until the loosened yards swung creaking above their heads. The canvas flapped, too, in the darkness, like some huge bird of prey fluttering its feathers previously to taking wing.

"Holy and just Ruler of the land and the sea!" exclaimed the Augustine, "remember thy repentant children, and have us, at this awful moment, in thy omnipotent protection!"

"The winds are come down, and even the dumb lake sends us the signal to be ready!" shouted Maso. "Overboard with the freight, if ye would live!"

A sudden heavy plunge into the water proved that the mariner was in earnest. Notwithstanding the imposing and awful signs with which they were surrounded, every individual of the nameless herd bethought him of the pack that contained his own scanty worldly effects, and there was a general and quick movement, with a view to secure them. As each man succeeded in effecting his own object, he was led away by that community of feeling which rules a multitude. The common rush was believed to be with a view to succor Maso, though each man secretly knew the falsity of the impression as respected his own particular case; and box after box began to tumble into the water, as new and eager recruits lent themselves to the task. The impulse was quickly imparted from one to another, until even young Sigismund was active in the work. On these slight accidents do the most important results depend, when the hot impulses that govern the mass obtain the ascendant.

It is not to be supposed that either Baptiste or Nicklaus Wagner witnessed the waste of their joint effects with total indifference. So far from this, each used every exertion in his power to prevent it, not only by his voice, but with his hands. One menaced the law—the other threatened Maso with condign punishment for his interference with a patron's rights and duties; but their remonstrances were uttered to inattentive ears. Maso knew himself to be irresponsible by situation, for it was not an easy matter to bring him within the grasp of the authorities; and as for the

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others, most of them were far too insignificant to feel much apprehension for a reparation that would be most likely, if it fell at all, to fall on those who were more able to bear it. Sigismund alone exerted himself under a sense of his liabilities; but he worked for one that was far dearer to him than gold, and little did he bethink him of any other consequences than those which might befall the precious life of Adelheid de Willading.

The meagre packages of the common passengers had been thrown in a place of safety, with the sort of unreflecting instinct with which we take care of our limbs when in danger. This timely precaution permitted each to work with a zeal that found no drawback in personal interest, and the effect was in proportion. A hundred hands were busy, and nearly as many throbbing hearts lent their impulses to the accomplishment of the one important object.

Baptiste and his people, aided by laborers of the port, had passed an entire day in heaping that pile on the deck of the Winkelried, which was now crumbling to pieces with a rapidity that seemed allied to magic. The patron and Nicklaus Wagner bawled themselves hoarse, with uttering useless threats and deprecations, for by this time the laborers in the work of destruction had received some such impetus as the rolling stone acquires by the increased momentum of its descent. Packages, boxes, bales, and everything that came to hand, were hurled into the water frantically, and without other thought than of the necessity of lightening the groaning bark of its burden. The agitation of the lake, too, was regularly increasing, wave following wave, in a manner to cause the vessel to pitch heavily, as it rose upon the coming, or sank with the receding swell. At length, a shout announced that in one portion of the pile the deck was attained!

The work proceeded with greater security to those engaged, for hitherto the motion of the bark, and the unequal footing, frequently rendered their situations, in the darkness and confusion, to the last degree hazardous. Maso now abandoned his own active agency in the toil, for no sooner did he see the others fairly and zealously enlisted in the undertaking, than he ceased his personal efforts to give those directions which, coming from one accustomed to the occupation, were far more valuable than any service that could be derived from a single arm.

"Thou art known to me, Signor Maso," said Baptiste, hoarse with his impotent efforts to restrain the torrent, "and thou shalt answer for this, as well as for other of thy crimes, so soon as we reach the haven of Vévey!"

"Dotard! thou wouldst carry thyself and all with thee, by thy narrowness of spirit, to a port from which, when it is once entered, none ever sail again!"

"It lieth between ye both," rejoined Nicklaus Wagner; "thou art not less to blame than these madmen, Baptiste. Hadst thou left the town at the hour named in our conditions, this danger could not have overtaken us."

"Am I a god to command the winds? I would that I had never seen thee or thy cheeses, or that thou wouldst relieve me of thy presence, and go after them into the lake."

"This comes of sleeping on duty; nay, I know not but that a proper use of the oars would still bring us in, in safety, and without necessary harm to the property of any. Noble Baron de Willading, here may be occasion for your testimony, and, as a citizen of Berne, I pray you to heed well the circumstances."

Baptiste was not in a humor to bear these merited reproaches, and he rejoined upon the aggrieved Nicklaus in a manner that would speedily have brought their ill-timed wrangle to an issue, had not Maso passed rudely between them, shoving them asunder with the sinews of a giant. This repulse served to keep the peace for the moment, but the wordy war continued with so much acrimony, and with so many unmeasured terms, that Adelheid and her maids, pale and terror-struck by the surrounding scene as they were, gladly shut their ears, to exclude epithets of such bitterness and menace that they curdled the blood. Maso passed on among the workmen, when he had interposed between the disputants. He gave his orders with perfect self-possession, though his understanding eye perceived that, instead of magnifying the danger, he had himself not fully anticipated its extent. The rolling of

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the waves was now incessant, and the quick, washing rush of the water, a sound familiar to the seamen, announced that they had become so large that their summits broke, sending their lighter foam ahead. There were symptoms, too, which proved that their situation was understood by those on the land. Lights were flashing along the strand near Vévey, and it was not difficult to detect, even at the distance at which they lay, the evidences of a strong feeling among the people of the town.

"I doubt not that we have been seen," said Melchior de Willading, "and that our friends are busy in devising means to aid us. Roger de Blonay is not a man to see us perish without an effort, nor would the worthy bailiff, Peter Hofmeister, be idle, knowing that a brother of the burgerschaft, and an old school associate, hath need of his assistance."

"None can come to us without running an equal risk with ourselves," answered the Genoese. "It were better that we should be left to our own exertions. I like the coolness of this unknown mariner, and I put my faith in God!"

A new shout proclaimed that the deck had been gained on the other side of the bark. Much the greater part of the deck-load had now irretrievably disappeared, and the movements of the relieved vessel were more lively and sane. Maso called to him one or two of the regular crew, and together they rolled up the canvas in a manner peculiar to the latine rig; for a breath of hot air, the first of any sort that had been felt for many hours, passed athwart the bark. This duty was performed, as canvas is known to be furled at need, but it was done securely. Maso then went among the laborers again, encouraging them with his voice, and directing their efforts with his counsel.

"Thou art not equal to thy task," he said, addressing one who was vainly endeavoring to roll a bale to the side of the vessel, a little apart from the rest of the busy crowd; "thou wilt do better to assist the others, than to waste thy force here."

"I feel the strength to remove a mountain! Do we not work for our lives?"

The mariner bent forward, and looked into the other's face. These frantic and ill-directed efforts came from the Westphalian student.

"Thy star has disappeared," he rejoined, smiling—for Maso had smiled in scenes far more imposing than even that with which he was now surrounded.

"She gazes at it still; she thinks of one that loves her, who is journeying far from the fatherland."

"Hold! Since thou wilt have it so, I will help thee to cast this bale into the water. Place thine arm thus; an ounce of well-directed force is worth a pound that acts against itself."

Stooping together, their united strength did that which had baffled the single efforts of the scholar. The package rolled to the gangway, and the German, frenzied with excitement, shouted aloud. The bark lurched, and the bale went over the side, as if the lifeless mass were suddenly possessed with the desire to perform the evolution which its inert weight had so long resisted. Maso recovered his footing, which had been deranged by the unexpected movement, with a seaman's dexterity, but his companion was no longer at his side. Kneeling on the gangway, he perceived the dark bale disappearing in the element, with the feet of the Westphalian dragging after. He bent forward to grasp the rising body, but it never returned to the surface, being entangled in the cords, or, what was equally probable, retained by the frantic grasp of the student, whose mind had yielded to the awful character of the night.

The life of Il Maledetto had been one of great vicissitudes and peril. He had often seen men pass suddenly into the other state of existence, and had been calm himself amid the cries, the groans, and what is far more appalling, the execrations of the dying, but never before had he witnessed so brief and silent an end. For more than a minute, he hung suspended over the dark and working water, expecting to see the student return; and, when hope was reluctantly abandoned, he arose to his feet, a startled and admonished man. Still discretion did not desert him. He saw the uselessness, and even the danger, of distracting the attention of the workmen, and the ill-fated scholar was permitted to pass away without a word of regret or a comment on his fate. None knew of his loss but the

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wary mariner, nor was his person missed by any one of those who had spent the day in his company. But she to whom he had plighted his faith on the banks of the Elbe long gazed at that pale star, and wept in bitterness that her feminine constancy met with no return. Her true affections long outlived their object, for his image was deeply enshrined in a warm female heart. Days, weeks, months, and years passed for her in the wasting cheerlessness of hope deferred, but the dark Leman never gave up its secret, and he to whom her lover's fate alone was known little bethought him of an accident which, if not forgotten, was but one of many similar frightful incidents in his eventful career.

Maso reappeared among the crowd with the forced composure of one who well knew that authority was most efficient when most calm. The command of the vessel was now virtually with him, Baptiste, enervated by the extraordinary crisis, and choking with passion, being utterly incapable of giving a distinct or a useful order. It was fortunate for those in the bark that the substitute was so good, for more fearful signs never impended over the Leman than those which darkened the hour.

We have necessarily consumed much time in relating these events, the pen not equalling the activity of the thoughts. Twenty minutes, however, had not passed since the tranquillity of the lake was first disturbed, and so great had been the exertions of those in the Winkelried that the time appeared to be shorter. But, though it had been so well employed, neither had the powers of the air been idle. The unnatural opening in the heavens was shut, and at short intervals, those fearful wheelings of the aërial squadrons were drawing nearer. Thrice had fitful breathings of warm air passed over the bark, and occasionally, as she plunged into a sea that was heavier than common, the faces of those on board were cooled, as it might be with some huge fan. These were no more, however, than sudden changes in the atmosphere, of which veins were displaced by the distant struggle between the heated air of the lakes and that which had been chilled on the glaciers, or they were the still more simple result of the violent agitation of the vessel.

The deep darkness which shut in the vault, giving to the embedded Leman the appearance of a gloomy, liquid glen, contributed to the awful sublimity of the night. The ramparts of Savoy were barely distinguishable from the flying clouds, having the appearance of black walls, seemingly within reach of the hand; while the more varied and softer côtes of Vaud lay an indefinable and sombre mass, less menacing, it is true, but equally confused and unattainable.

Still the beacon blazed in the grate of old Roger de Blonay, and flaring torches glided along the strand. The shore seemed alive with human beings, able as themselves to appreciate and to feel their situation.

The deck was now cleared, and the travellers were collected in a group between the masts. Pippo had lost all his pleasantry under the dread signs of the hour, and Conrad, trembling with superstition and terror, was free from hypocrisy. They, and those with them, discoursed on their chances, on the nature of the risks they ran, and on its probable causes.

"I see no image of Maria, nor even a pitiful lamp to any of the blessed, in this accursed bark!" said the juggler, after several had hazarded their quaint and peculiar opinions. "Let the patron come forth and answer for his negligence."

The passengers were about equally divided between those who dissented from, and those who worshipped with Rome. This proposal, therefore, met with a mixed reception. The latter protested against the neglect, while the former, equally under the influence of abject fear, were loud in declaring that the idolatry itself might cost them all their lives.

"The curse of Heaven alight on the evil tongue that first uttered the thought!" muttered the trembling Pippo between his teeth, too prudent to fly openly in the face of so strong an opposition, and yet too credulous not to feel the omission in every nerve—"Hast nothing by thee, pious Conrad, that may avail a Christian?"

The pilgrim reached forth his hand with a rosary and cross. The sacred emblem passed from mouth to mouth, among the believers, with a zeal little short of that they had manifested in unloading the deck. Encouraged by this sacrifice, they called loudly upon Baptiste to present himself. Confronted with these unnurtured spirits, the patron

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shook in every limb, for, between anger and abject fear, his self-command had by this time absolutely deserted him. To the repeated appeals to procure a light, that it might be placed before a picture of the mother of God, which Conrad produced, he objected his Protestant faith, the impossibility of maintaining the flame while the bark pitched so violently, and the divided opinions of the passengers. The Catholics bethought them of the country and influence of Maso, and they loudly called upon him, for the love of God, to come and enforce their requests. But the mariner was occupied on the forecastle, lowering one anchor after another into the water, passively assisted by the people of the bark, who wondered at a precaution so useless, since no rope could reach the bottom, even while they did not dare deny his orders. Something was now said of the curse that had alighted on the vessel, in consequence of its patron's intention to embark the headsman. Baptiste trembled to the skin of his crown, and his blood crept with a superstitious awe.

"Dost think there can really be aught in this?" he asked, with parched lips and a faltering tongue.

All distinction of faith was lost in the general ridicule. Now the Westphalian was gone, there was not a man among them to doubt that a navigation so accompanied would be cursed. Baptiste stammered, muttered many incoherent sentences, and finally, in his impotency, he permitted the dangerous secret to escape him.

The intelligence that Balthazar was among them produced a solemn and deep silence. The fact, however, furnished as conclusive evidence of the cause of their peril to the minds of these untutored beings, as a mathematician could have received from the happiest of his demonstrations. New light broke in upon them, and the ominous stillness was followed by a general demand for the patron to point out the man. Obeying this order, partly under the influence of a terror that was allied to his moral weakness, and partly in bodily fear, he shoved the headsman forward, substituting the person of the proscribed man for his own, and, profiting by the occasion, he stole out of the crowd.

When the Herr Müller, or, as he was now known and called, Balthazar, was rudely pushed into the hands of these ferocious agents of superstition, the apparent magnitude of the discovery induced a general and breathless pause. Like the treacherous calm that had so long reigned upon the lake, it was a precursor of a fearful and violent explosion. Little was said, for the occasion was too ominous for a display of vulgar feeling, but Conrad, Pippo, and one or two more silently raised the fancied offender in their arms and bore him desperately toward the side of the bark.

"Call on Maria, for the good of thy soul!" whispered the Neapolitan, with a strange mixture of Christian zeal, in the midst of all his ferocity.

The sound of words like these usually conveys the idea of charity and love; but notwithstanding this gleam of hope, Balthazar still found himself borne toward his fate.

On quitting the throng that clustered together in a dense body between the masts, Baptiste encountered his old antagonist, Nicklaus Wagner. The fury which had so long been pent in his breast suddenly found vent, and in the madness of the moment he struck him. The stout Bernese grappled his assailant, and the struggle became fierce as that of brutes. Scandalized by such a spectacle, offended by the disrespect, and ignorant of what else was passing near—for the crowd had uttered its resolutions in the suppressed voices of men determined—the Baron de Willading and the Signor Grimaldi advanced with dignity and firmness to prevent the shameful strife. At this critical moment the voice of Balthazar was heard above the roar of the coming wind, not calling on Maria, as he had been admonished, but appealing to the two old nobles to save him. Sigismund sprang forward like a lion at the cry, but, too late to reach those who were about to cast the headsman from the gangway, he was just in time to catch the body by its garments, when actually sailing in the air. By a vast effort of strength its direction was diverted. Instead of alighting in the water, Balthazar encountered the angry combatants, who, driven back on the two nobles, forced the whole four over the side of the bark into the water.

The struggle between the two bodies of air ceased, that on the surface of the lake yield-

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ing to the avalanche from above, and the tempest came howling upon the bark.

CHAPTER VII.

——"and now the glee
Of the loud hills shakes with their mountain mirth."
—Byron.

It is necessary to recapitulate a little, in order to connect events. The signs of the hour had been gradually but progressively increasing. While the lake was unruffled, a stillness so profound prevailed, that sounds from the distant port, such as the heavy fall of an oar, or a laugh from the watermen, had reached the ears of those in the Winkelried, bringing with them the feeling of security, and the strong charm of a calm at even. To these succeeded the gathering in the heavens, and the roaring of the winds, as they came rushing down the sides of the Alps, in their first descent into the basin of the Leman. As the sight grew useless, except as it might study the dark omens of the impending vault, the sense of hearing became doubly acute, and it had been a powerful agent in heightening the vague but acute apprehensions of the travellers. The rushes of the wind, which at first were broken, at intervals resembling the roar of a chimney-top in a gale, had soon reached the fearful grandeur of those aërial wheelings of squadrons to which we have more than once alluded, passing off in dread mutterings, that, in the deep quiet of all other things, bore a close affinity to the rumbling of a surf upon the seashore. The surface of the lake was first broken after one of these symptoms, and it was this infallible sign of a gale which had assured Maso there was no time to lose. This movement of the element in a calm is a common phenomenon on waters that are much environed with elevated and irregular headlands, and it is a certain proof that wind is on some distant portion of the sheet. It occurs frequently on the ocean, too, where the mariner is accustomed to find a heavy sea setting in one direction, the effects of some distant storm, while the breeze around him is blowing in its opposite. It had been succeeded by the single rolling swell, like the outer circle of waves produced by dropping a stone into the water, and the regular and increasing agitation of the lake, until the element broke as in a tempest, and that seemingly of its own volition, since not a breath of air was stirring. This last and formidable symptom of the force of the coming gust, however, had now become so unequivocal that, at the moment when the three travellers and the patron fell from her gangway, the Winkelried, to use a seaman's phrase, was literally wallowing in the troughs of the seas.

A dull, unnatural light preceded the winds, and notwithstanding the previous darkness, the nature of the accident was fully apparent to all. Even the untamed spirits that had just been bent upon so fierce a sacrifice to their superstitious dread, uttered cries of horror, while the piercing shriek of Adelheid sounded, in that fearful moment, as if beings of superhuman attributes were riding in the gale. The name of Sigismund was heard, too, in one of those wild appeals that the frantic suffer to escape them in their despair. But the interval between the plunge into the water and the swoop of the tempest was so short, that, to the senses of the travellers, the whole seemed the occurrence of the same teeming moment.

Maso had completed his work on the forecastle, had seen that other provisions which he had ordered were duly made, and reached the tiller just in time to witness and to understand all that occurred. Adelheid and her female attendants were already lashed to the principal masts, and ropes were given to the others around her, as indispensable precautions; for the deck of the bark, now cleared of every particle of its freight, was as exposed and as defenceless against the power of the wind as a naked heath. Such was the situation of the Winkelried, when the omens of the night changed to their dread reality.

Instinct, in cases of sudden and unusual danger, must do the office of reason. There was no necessity to warn the unthinking but panic-struck crowd to provide for their own safety, for every man in the centre of the barge threw his body flat on the deck, and grasped the cords that Maso had taken care to provide for that purpose, with the tenacity with which all who possess life cling to the

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means of existence. The dogs gave beautiful proofs of the secret and wonderful means that nature has imparted, to answer the ends of their creation. Old Uberto crouched, cowering, and oppressed with a sense of helplessness, at the side of his master, while the Newfoundland follower of the mariner went leaping from gangway to gangway, snuffing the heated air and barking wildly, as if he would challenge the elements to close for the strife.

A vast body of warm air had passed unheeded athwart the bark, during the minute that preceded the intended sacrifice of Balthazar. It was the forerunner of the hurricane, which had chased it from the bed where it had been steeping since the warm and happy noon-tide. Ten thousand chariots at their speed could not have equalled the rumbling that succeeded, when the winds came booming over the lake. As if too eager to permit anything within their fangs to escape, they brought with them a wild, dull light, which filled while it clouded the atmosphere, and which, it was scarcely fanciful to imagine, had been hurried down in their vortex from those chill glaciers, where they had so long been condensing their forces for the present descent. The waves were not increased, but depressed by the pressure of this atmospheric column, though it took up hogsheads of water from their crests, scattering it in fine penetrating spray, till the entire space between the heavens and the earth seemed saturated with its particles.

The Winkelried received the shock at a moment when the lee-side of her broad deck was wallowing in the trough, and its weather was protruded on the summit of a swell. The wind howled when it struck the pent limits, as if angered at being thwarted, and there was a roar under the wide gangways, resembling that of lions. The reeling vessel was raised in a manner to cause those on board to believe it about to be lifted bodily from the water, but the ceaseless rolling of the element restored the balance. Maso afterward affirmed that nothing but this accidental position, which formed a sort of lee, prevented all in the bark from being swept from the deck, before the first gust of the hurricane.

Sigismund had heard the heart-rending appeal of Adelheid, and, notwithstanding the awful strife of the elements and the fearful character of the night, he alone breasted the shock on his feet. Though aided by a rope and bowed like a reed, his herculean frame trembled under the shock, in a way to render even his ability to resist seriously doubtful. But, the first blast expended, he sprang to the gangway, and leaped into the caldron of the lake unhesitatingly, and yet in the possession of all his faculties. He was desperately bent on saving a life so dear to Adelheid, or on dying in the attempt.

Maso had watched the crisis with a seaman's eye, a seaman's resources, and a seaman's coolness. He had not refused to quit his feet, but kneeling on one knee, he pressed the tiller down, lashed it, and clinging to the massive timber, faced the tempest with the steadiness of a water-god. There was sublimity in the intelligence, deliberation, and calculating skill with which this solitary, unknown, and nearly hopeless mariner obeyed his professional instinct in that fearful concussion of the elements, which, loosened from every restraint, now appeared abandoned to their own wild and fierce will. He threw aside his cap, pushed forward his thick but streaming locks, as veils to protect his eyes, and watched the first encounter of the wind, as the wary but sullen lion keeps his gaze on the hostile elephant. A grim smile stole across his features, when he felt the vessel settle again into its watery bed, after that breathless moment in which there had been reason to fear it might actually be lifted from its proper element. Then the precaution, which had seemed so useless and incomprehensible to others, came in play. The bark made a fearful whirl from the spot where it had so long lain, yielding to the touch of the gust like a vane turning on its pivot, while the water gurgled several streaks on deck. But the cables were no sooner taut than the numerous anchors resisted, and brought the bark head to wind. Maso felt the yielding of the vessel's stern, as she swung furiously round, and he cheered aloud. The trembling of the timbers, the dashing against the pointed beak, and that high jet of water, which shot up over the bows and fell heavily on the forecastle, washing aft in a flood, were so many evidences that the cables were true. Advancing from his post, with some such

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dignity as a master of fence displays in the exercise of his art, he shouted for his dog.

"Nettuno!—Nettuno!—where art thou, brave Nettuno?"

The faithful animal was whining near him, unheard in that war of the elements. He waited only for this encouragement to act. No sooner was his master's voice heard, than, barking bravely, he snuffed the gale, dashed to the side of the vessel, and leaped into the boiling lake.

When Melchior de Willading and his friend returned to the surface, after their plunge, it was like men making their appearance in a world abandoned to the infernal humors of the fiends of darkness. The reader will understand it was at the instant of the swoop of the winds, that has just been detailed, for what we have taken so many pages to describe in words, scarce needed a minute of time in the accomplishment.

Maso knelt on the verge of the gangway, sustaining himself by passing an arm around a shroud, and, bending forward, he gazed into the caldron of the lake with aching eyes. Once or twice he thought he heard the stifled breathing of one who struggled with the raging water; but, in that roar of the winds, it was easy to be deceived. He shouted encour agement to his dog, however, and gathering a small rope rapidly, he made a heaving coil of one of its ends. This he cast far from him, with a peculiar swing and dexterity, hauling-in, and repeating the experiments, steadily and with unwearied industry. The rope was necessarily thrown at hazard, for the misty light prevented more than it aided vision; and the howling of the powers of the air filled his ears with sounds that resembled the laugh of devils.

In the cultivation of the youthful manly exercises, neither of the old nobles had neglected the useful skill of being able to buffet with the waves. But both possessed what was far better, in such a strait, than the knowledge of a swimmer, in that self-command and coolness in emergencies which they are apt to acquire who pass their time in encountering the hazards and in overcoming the difficulties of war. Each retained a sufficiency of recollection, therefore, on coming to the surface, to understand his situation, and not to increase the danger by the ill-directed and frantic efforts that usually drown the frightened. The case was sufficiently desperate, at the best, without the additional risk of distraction, for the bark had already drifted to some unseen spot, that, as respects them, was quite unattainable. In this uncertainty, it would have been madness to steer amid the waste of waters, as likely to go wrong as right, and they limited their efforts to mutual support and encouragement, placing their trust in God.

Not so with Sigismund. To him the roaring tempest was mute, the boiling and hissing lake had no horrors, and he had plunged into the fathomless Leman as recklessly as he could have leaped to land. The shriek, the "Sigismund! oh, Sigismund!" of Adelheid, was in his ears, and her cry of anguish thrilled on every nerve. The athletic young Swiss was a practised and expert swimmer, or it is improbable that even these strong impulses could have overcome the instinct of self-preservation. In a tranquil basin, it would have been no extraordinary or unusual feat for him to conquer the distance between the Winkelreid and the shores of Vaud; but, like all the others, on casting himself into the water, he was obliged to shape his course at random, and this, too, amid such a driving spray as rendered even respiration difficult. As has been said, the waves were compressed into their bed rather then augmented by the wind; but, had it been otherwise, the mere heaving and settling of the element, while it obstructs his speed, offers a support rather than an obstacle to the practised swimmer.

Notwithstanding all these advantages, the strength of his impulses, and the numberless occasions on which he had breasted the surges of the Mediterranean, Sigismund, on recovering from his plunge, felt the fearful chances of the risk he ran, as the stern soldier meets the hazards of battle, in which he knows if there is victory, there is also also death. He dashed the troubled water aside, though he swam blindly, and each stroke urged him further from the bark, his only hope of safety. He was between dark, rolling mounds, and, on rising to their summits, a hurricane of mist made him glad to sink again within a similar shelter. The breaking crests of the waves, which were glancing off in foam, also gave him great annoy-

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ance, for such was their force, that, more than once, he was hurled helpless as a log before them. Still he swam boldly, and with strength; nature having gifted him with more than the usual physical energy of man. But, uncertain in his course, unable to see the length of his own body, and pressed hard upon by the wind, even the spirit of Sigismund Steinbach could not long withstand so many adverse circumstances. He had already turned, wavering in purpose, thinking to catch a glimpse of the bark in the direction he had come, when a dark mass floated immediately before his eyes, and he felt the cold clammy nose of the dog, scenting about his face. The admirable instinct, or we might better say, the excellent training of Nettuno, told him that his services were not needed here, and, barking with wild delight, as if in mockery of the infernal din of the tempest, he sheered aside and swam swiftly on. A thought flashed like lightning on the brain of Sigismund. His best hope was in the inexplicable faculties of this animal. Throwing forward an arm, he seized the bushy tail of the dog, and suffered himself to be dragged ahead, he knew not whither, though he seconded the movement with his own exertions. Another bark proclaimed that the experiment was successful, and voices, rising as it were from the water, close at hand, announced the proximity of human beings. The brunt of the hurricane was past, and the washing of the waves, which had been stilled by the roar and the revelry of the winds, again became audible.

The strength of the two struggling old men was sinking fast. The Signor Grimaldi had thus far generously sustained his friend, who was less expert than himself in the water, and he continued to cheer him with a hope he did not feel himself, nobly refusing to the last to separate their fortunes.

"How dost find thyself, old Melchior," he asked. "Cheer thee, friend—I think there is succor at hand."

The water gurgled at the mouth of the Baron, who was near the gasp.

"'Tis late—bless thee, dearest Gaetano—God be with my child—my Adelheid—poor Adelheid!"

The utterance of this precious name under a father's agony of spirit, most probably saved his life. The sinewy arm of Sigismund, directed by the words, grasped his dress, and he felt at once that a new and preserving power had interposed between him and the caverns of the lake. It was time, for the water had covered the face of the failing Baron, ere the muscular arm of the youth came to perform his charitable office.

"Yield thee to the dog, signor," said Sigismund, clearing his mouth of water to speak calmly, once assured of his own burden; "trust to his sagacity, and,—God keep us in mind!—all may yet be well!"

The Signor Grimaldi retained sufficient presence of mind to follow this advice, and it was probably quite as fortunate that his friend had so far lost his consciousness as to become an unresisting burden in the hands of Sigismund.

"Nettuno!—gallant Nettuno!" swept past them on the gale for the first time, the partial hushing of the winds permitting the clear call of Maso to reach so far. The sound directed the efforts of Sigismund, though the dog had swum steadily away the moment he had the Genoese in his grip, and with a certainty of manner that showed he was at no loss for a direction.

But Sigismund had taxed his powers too far. He, who could have buffeted an ordinary sea for hours, was now completely exhausted by the unwonted exertions, the deadening influence of the tempest, and the log-like weight of his burden. He would not desert the father of Adelheid, and yet each fainting and useless stroke told him to despair. The dog had already disappeared in the darkness, and he was even uncertain again of the true position of the bark. He prayed in agony for a single glimpse of the rocking masts and yards, or to catch one syllable of the cheering voice of Maso. But in both his wishes were vain. In place of the former, he had naught but the veiled misty light, that had come on with the hurricane; and instead of the latter, his ears were filled with the washing of the waves and the roars of the gusts. The blasts now descended to the surface of the lake, and now went whirling and swelling upward, in a way to lead the listener to fancy that the viewless winds might for once be seen. For a single

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painful instant, in one of those disheartening moments of despair that will come over the stoutest, his hand was about to relinquish its hold on the Baron, and to make the last natural struggle for life; but that fair modest picture of maiden loveliness and truth, which had so long haunted his waking hours and adorned his night-dreams, interposed to prevent the act. After this brief and fleeting weakness, the young man seemed endowed with new energy. He swam stronger, and with greater apparent advantage than before.

"Nettuno — gallant Nettuno!"— again drove over him, bringing with it the chilling certainty that, turned from his course by the rolling of the water, he had thrown away these desperate efforts by taking a direction which led him from the bark. While there was the smallest appearance of success, no difficulties, of whatever magnitude, could entirely extinguish hope; but when the dire conviction that he had been actually aiding, instead of diminishing, the danger, pressed upon Sigismund, he abandoned his efforts. The most he endeavored or hoped to achieve, was to keep his own head and that of his companion above the fatal element, while he answered the cry of Maso with a shout of despair.

"Nettuno!—gallant Nettuno!"—again flew past on the gale.

This cry might have been an answer, or it might merely be the Italian encouraging his dog to bear on the body with which it was already loaded. Sigismund uttered a shout, which he felt must be the last. He struggled desperately, but in vain: the world and its allurements were vanishing from his thoughts, when a dark line whirled over him, and fell thrashing upon the very wave which covered his face. The instinctive grasp caught it, and the young soldier felt himself impelled ahead. He had seized the rope which the mariner had not ceased to throw, as the fisherman casts his line, and he was at the side of the bark before his confused faculties enabled him to understand the means employed for his rescue.

Maso took a hasty turn with the rope, and stooping forward, favored by the roll of the vessel, he drew the Baron de Willading upon deck. Watching his time, he repeated the experiment, always with admirable coolness and dexterity, placing Sigismund also in safety. The former was immediately dragged senseless to the centre of the bark, where he received those attentions that had just been eagerly offered to the Signor Grimaldi, and with the same happy results. But Sigismund motioned all away from himself, knowing that their cares were needed elsewhere. He staggered forward a few paces, and then, yielding to a complete exhaustion of his power, he fell at full length on the wet planks. He long lay panting, speechless, and unable to move, with a sense of death on his frame.

"Nettuno! gallant Nettuno!"—shouted the indefatigable Maso, still at his post on the gangway, whence he cast his rope with unchanging perseverance. The fitful winds, which had already played so many fierce antics that eventful night, sensibly lulled, and, giving one or two sighs, as if regretting that they were about to be curbed again by that almighty Master, from whose benevolent hands they had so furtively escaped, as suddenly ceased blowing. The yards creaked, swinging loosely above the crowded deck, and the dull washing of water filled the ear. To these diminished sounds were to be added the barking of the dog, who was still abroad in the darkness, and a struggling noise like the broken and smothered attempts of human voices. Although the time appeared an age to all who awaited the result, scarcely five minutes had elapsed since the accident occurred and the hurricane had reached them. There was still hope, therefore, for those who yet remained in the water. Maso felt the eagerness of one who had already been successful beyond his hopes, and, in his desire to catch some guiding signal, he leaned forward, till the rolling lake washed into his face.

"Ha! gallant—gallant Nettuno!"

Men certainly spoke, and that near him. But the sounds resembled words uttered beneath a cover. The wind whistled, too, though but for a moment, and then it seemed to sail upward into the dark vault of the heavens. Nettuno barked audibly, and his master answered with another shout, for the sympathy of man in his kind is inextinguishable.

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"My brave, my noble Nettuno!"

The stillness was now imposing, and Maso heard the dog growl. This ill-omened signal was undeniably followed by smothered voices. The latter became clearer, as if the mocking winds were willing that a sad exhibition of human frailty should be known, or, what is more probable, violent passion had awakened stronger powers of speech. This much the mariner understood.

"Loosen thy grasp, accursed Baptiste!"

"Wretch, loosen thine own!"

"Is God naught with thee?"

"Why dost throttle so, infernal Nicklaus?"

"Thou wilt die damned!"

"Thou chokest—villain—pardon!—pardon!"

He heard no more. The merciful elements interposed to drown the appalling strife. Once or twice the dog howled, but the tempest came across the Leman again in its might, as if the short pause had been made merely to take breath. The winds took a new direction; and the bark, still held by its anchors, swung wide off from its former position, tending in toward the mountains of Savoy. During the first burst of this new blast, even Maso was glad to crouch to the deck, for millions of infinitely fine particles were lifted from the lake, and driven on with the atmosphere with a violence to take away his breath. The danger of being swept before the furious tide of the driving element was also an accident not impossible. When the lull returned, no exertion of his faculties could catch a single sound foreign to the proper character of the scene, such as the splash of the water, and the creaking of the long, swinging yards.

The mariner now felt a deep concern for his dog. He called to him until he grew hoarse, but fruitlessly. The change of position, with the constant and varying drift of the vessel, had carried them beyond the reach of the human voice. More time was expended in summoning "Nettuno! gallant Nettuno!" than had been consumed in the passage of all the events which it has been necessary to our object to relate so minutely, and always with the same want of success. The mind of Maso was pitched to a degree far above the opinions and habits of those with whom his life brought him ordinarily in contact, but, as even fine gold will become tarnished by exposure to impure air, he had not entirely escaped the habitual weakness of the Italians of his class. When he found that no cry could recall his faithful companion, he threw himself upon the deck in a paroxysm of passion, tore his hair, and wept audibly.

"Nettuno! my brave, my faithful Nettuno!" he said. "What are all these to me, without thee! Thou alone lovedst me—thou alone hast passed with me, through fair and foul—through good and evil, without change, or wish for another master! When the pretended friend has been false, thou hast remained faithful! When others were sycophants, thou wert never a flatterer!"

Struck with this singular exhibition of sorrow, the good Augustine, who until now, like all the others, had been looking to his own safety, or employed in restoring the exhausted, took advantage of the favorable change in the weather, and advanced with the language of consolation.

"Thou hast saved all our lives, bold mariner," he said, "and there are those in the bark who will know how to reward thy courage and skill. Forget then thy dog, and indulge in a grateful heart to Maria and the saints, that they have been our friends and thine in this exceeding jeopardy."

"Father, I have eaten with the animal—slept with the animal—fought, swum, and made merry with him, and I could now drown with him! What are thy nobles and their gold to me, without my dog? The gallant brute will die the death of despair, swimming about in search of the bark in the midst of the darkness, until even one of his high breed and courage must suffer his heart to burst."

"Christians have been called into the dread presence, unconfessed and unshrived, to-night; and we should bethink us of their souls, rather than indulge in this grief in behalf of one that, however faithful, ends but an unreasoning and irresponsible existence."

All this was thrown away upon Maso, who crossed himself habitually at the allusion to the drowned, but who did not the less bewail the loss of his dog, whom he seemed to love, like the affection that David

bore for Jonathan, with a love surpassing that of a woman. Perceiving that his counsel was useless, the good Augustine turned away, to kneel and offer up his own prayers of gratitude, and to bethink him of the dead.

"Nettuno! *povera, carissima bestia!*" continued Maso, "whither art thou swimming, in this infernal quarrel between the air and water? Would I were with thee, dog! No mortal shall ever share the love I bore thee, *povero Nettuno!*—I will never take another to my heart, like thee!"

The outbreaking of Maso's grief was sudden, and it was brief in its duration. In this respect it might be likened to the hurricane that had just passed. Excessive violence, in both cases, appeared to bring its own remedy, for the irregular, fitful gusts from the mountains had already ceased, and were succeeded by a strong but steady gale from the north; and the sorrow of Maso soon ended its characteristic plaints, to take a more continued and even character.

During the whole of the foregoing scenes, the common passengers had crouched to the deck, partly in stupor, partly in superstitious dread, and much of the time, from a positive inability to move without incurring the risk of being driven from the defenceless vessel into the lake. But, as the wind diminished in force, and the motion of the bark became more regular, they rallied their senses, like men who had been in a trance, and one by one they rose to their feet. About this time Adelheid heard the sound of her father's voice, blessing her care, and consoling her sorrow. The north wind blew away the canopy of clouds, and the stars shone above the angry Leman, bringing with them some such promise of divine aid as the pillar of fire afforded to the Israelites in their passage of the Red Sea. Such an evidence of returning peace brought renewed confidence. All in the bark, passengers as well as crew, took courage at the benignant signs, while Adelheid wept, in gratitude and joy, over the gray hairs of her father.

Maso had now obtained complete command of the Winkelried, as much by the necessity of the case, as by the unrivalled skill and courage he had manifested during the fearful minutes of their extreme jeopardy. No sooner did he succeed in staying his own grief, than he called the people about him, and issued his orders for the new measures that had become necessary.

All who have ever been subject to their influence know that there is nothing more uncertain than the winds. Their fickleness has passed into a proverb; but their inconstancy, as well as their power, from the fanning air to the destructive tornado, are to be traced to causes that are sufficiently clear, though hid in their nature from the calculations of our forethought. The tempest of the night was owing to the simple fact that a condensed and chilled column of air from the mountains had pressed upon the heated substratum of the lake, and the latter, after a long resistance, suddenly finding vent for its escape, had been obliged to let in the cataract from above. As in all extraordinary efforts, whether physical or moral, reaction would seem to be a consequence of excessive action, the currents of air, pushed beyond their proper limits, were now setting back again, like a tide on its reflux. This cause produced the northern gale that succeeded the hurricane.

The wind that came from off the shores of Vaud was steady and fresh. The barks of the Leman are not constructed for beating to windward, and it might even have been questioned whether the Winkelried would have borne her canvas against so heavy a breeze. Maso, however, appeared to understand himself thoroughly, and as he had acquired the influence which hardihood and skill are sure to obtain over doubt and timidity in situations of hazard, he was obeyed by all on board with submission, if not with zeal. No more was heard of the headsman or of his supposed agency in the storm; and, as he prudently kept himself in the background, so as not to endanger a revival of the superstition of his enemies, he seemed entirely forgotten.

The business of getting the anchors occupied a considerable time, for Maso refused, now there existed no necessity for the sacrifice, to permit a yarn to be cut; but, released from this hold on the water, the bark whirled away, and was soon drifting before the wind. The mariner was at the helm, and causing the head-sail to be loosened, he

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steered directly for the rocks of Savoy. This manœuvre excited disagreeable suspicions in the minds of several on board, for the lawless character of their pilot had been more than suspected in the course of their short acquaintance, and the coast toward which they were furiously rushing was known to be iron bound, and in such a gale fatal to all who came rudely upon its rocks. Half an hour removed their apprehension. When near enough to the mountains to feel their deadening influence on the gale, the natural effect of the eddies formed by their resistance to the currents, he luffed-to and set his main-sail. Relieved by this wise precaution, the Winkelried now wore her canvas gallantly, and she dashed along the shore of Savoy with a foaming beak, shooting past ravine, valley, glen, and hamlet, as if sailing in air.

In less than an hour, St. Gingoulph, or the village through which the dividing line between the territories of Switzerland and those of the King of Sardinia passes, was abeam, and the excellent calculations of the sagacious Maso became still more apparent. He had foreseen another shift of wind, as the consequence of all this poise and counterpoise, and he was here met by the true breeze of the night. The last current came out of the gorge of the Valais, sullen, strong, and hoarse, bringing him, however, fairly to windward of his port. The Winkelried was cast in season, and when the gale struck her anew, her canvas drew fairly, and she walked out from beneath the mountains into the broad lake, like a swan obeying its instinct.

The passage across the width of the Leman, in that horn of the crescent and in such a breeze, required rather more than half an hour. This time was occupied among the common herd in self-felicitations, and in those vain boastings that distinguish the vulgar who have escaped an imminent danger without any particular merit of their own. Among those whose spirits were better trained and more rebuked, there were attentions to the sufferers and deep thanksgiving, with the touching intercourse of the grateful and happy. The late scenes, and the fearful fate of the patron and Nicklaus Wagner, cast a shade upon their joy, but all inwardly felt that they had been snatched from the jaws of death.

Maso shaped his course by the beacon that still blazed in the grate of old Roger de Blonay. With his eye riveted on the luff of his sail, his hip bearing hard against the tiller, and a heart that relieved itself, from time to time, with bitter sighs, he ruled the bark like a presiding spirit.

At length the black mass of the côtes of Vaud took more distinct and regular forms. Here and there, a tower or a tree betrayed its outlines against the sky, and then the objects on the margin of the lake began to stand out in gloomy relief from the land. Lights flared along the strand, and cries reached them from the shore. A dark shapeless pile stood directly athwart their watery path, and at the next moment it took the aspect of a ruined castle-like edifice. The canvas flapped and was handed, the Winkelried rose and set more slowly and with a gentler movement, and glided into the little, secure, artificial haven of La Tour de Peil. A forest of latine yards and low masts lay before them, but by giving the bark a rank sheer, Maso brought her to her berth, by the side of another lake craft, with a gentleness of collision that, as the mariners have it, would not have broken an egg.

A hundred voices greeted the travellers; for their approach had been seen and watched with intense anxiety. Fifty eager Vévaisans poured upon her deck in a noisy crowd the instant it was possible. Among others, a dark shaggy object bounded foremost. It leaped wildly forward, and Maso found himself in the embraces of Nettuno. A little later, when delight and more tempered feeling permitted examination, a lock of human hair was discovered entangled in the teeth of the dog, and the following week the bodies of Baptiste and the peasant of Berne were found still clinched in the desperate death-gripe, washed upon the shores of Vaud.

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CHAPTER VIII.

"The moon is up; by Heaven a lovely eve!
Long streams of light o'er glancing waves expand;
Now lads on shore may sigh and maids believe:
Such be our fate when we return to land!"
—BYRON.

THE approach of the Winkelried had been seen from Vévey throughout the afternoon and evening. The arrival of the Baron de Willading and his daughter was expected by many in the town, the rank and influence of the former in the great canton rendering him an object of interest to more than those who felt affection for his person and respect for his upright qualities. Roger de Blonay had not been his only youthful friend, for the place contained another, with whom he was intimate by habit, if not from a community of those principles which are the best cement of friendships.

The officer charged with the especial supervision of the districts or circles, into which Berne had caused its dependent territory of Vaud to be divided, was termed a *bailli*, a title that our word bailiff will scarcely render, except as it may strictly mean a substitute for the exercise of authority that is the property of another, but which, from the want of a better term, we may be compelled occasionally to use. The bailli, or bailiff, of Vévey was Peter Hofmeister, a member of one of those families of the bürgerschaft, or the municipal aristocracy of the canton, which found its institutions venerable, just, and, if one might judge from their language, almost sacred, simply because it had been in possession of certain exclusive privileges under their authority, that were not only comfortable in their exercise but fecund in other worldly advantages. This Peter Hofmeister was, in the main, a hearty, well-meaning, and somewhat benevolent person, but, living as he did under the secret consciousness that all was not as it should be, he pushed his opinions on the subject of vested interests, and on the stability of temporal matters, a little into extremes, pretty much on the same principle as that on which the engineer expends the largest portion of his art in fortifying the weakest point of a citadel, taking care that there shall be a constant flight of shot, great and small, across the most accessible of its approaches. By one of the exclusive ordinances of those times, in which men were glad to get relief from the violence and rapacity of the Baron and the satellite of the Prince, ordinances that it was the fashion of the day to term liberty, the family of Hofmeister had come into the exercise of a certain charge, or monopoly, that in truth had always constituted its wealth and importance, but of which it was accustomed to speak as forming its principal claim to the gratitude of the public, for duties that had been performed not only so well, but for so long a period, by an unbroken succession of patriots descended from the same stock. They who judged of the value attached to the possession of this charge, by the animation with which all attempts to relieve them of the burden were repelled, must have been in error; for, to hear their friends descant on the difficulties of the duties, on the utter impossibility that they should be properly discharged by any family that had not been in their exercise just one hundred and seventy-two years and a half, the precise period of the hard servitude of the Hofmeisters, and the rare merit of their self-devotion to the common good, it would seem that they were so many modern Curtii, anxious to leap into the chasm of uncertain and endless toil, to save the Republic from the ignorance and peculations of certain interested and selfish knaves, who wished to enjoy the same high trusts, for a motive so unworthy as that of their own particular advantage. This subject apart, however, and with a strong reservation in favor of the supremacy of Berne, on whom his importance depended, a better or more philanthropic man than Peter Hofmeister would not have been easily found. He was a hearty laugher, a hard drinker, a common and peculiar failing of the age, a great respecter of the law, as was meet in one so situated, and a bachelor of sixty-eight, a time of life that, by referring his education to a period more remote by half a century, than that in which the incidents of our legend took place, was not at all in favor of any very romantic predilection in behalf of the rest of the human race. In short, the Herr Hofmeister was a bailiff, much as Balthazar was a headsman, on account of some peculiar merit or demerit (it might now be difficult to say

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which) of one of his ancestors, by the laws of the canton, and by the opinions of men. The only material difference between them was in the fact, that the one greatly enjoyed his station, while the other had but an indifferent relish for his trust.

When Roger de Blonay, by the aid of a good glass, had assured himself that the bark which lay off St. Saphorin, in the even tide, with yards a-cock-bill, and sails pendent in their picturesque drapery, contained a party of gentle travellers who occupied the stern, and saw by the plumes and robes that a female of condition was among them, he gave an order to prepare the beacon-fire, and descended to the port, in order to be in readiness to receive his friend. Here he found the bailiff, pacing the public promenade, which is washed by the limpid water of the lake, with the air of a man who had more on his mind than the daily cares of office. Although the Baron de Blonay was a Vaudois, and looked upon all the functionaries of his country's conquerors with a species of hereditary dislike, he was by nature a man of mild and courteous qualities, and the meeting was, as usual, friendly in the externals, and of seeming cordiality. Great care was had by both to speak in the second person; on the part of the Vaudois, that it might be seen he valued himself as, at least, the equal of the representative of Berne, and, on that of the bailiff, in order to show that his office made him as good as the head of the oldest house in all that region.

"Thou expectest to see friends from Genf in yonder bark?" said the Herr Hofmeister, abruptly.

"And thou?"

"A friend, and one more than a friend," answered the bailiff evasively. "My advices tell me that Melchior de Willading will sojourn among us during the festival of the Abbaye, and secret notice has been sent that there will be another here who wishes to see our merry-making, without pretension to the honors that he might fairly claim."

"It is not rare for nobles of mark, and even princes, to visit us on these occasions, under feigned names and without the *éclat* of their rank; for the great, when they descend to follies, seldom like to bring their high condition within their influence."

"The wiser they. I have my own troubles with these accursed fooleries, for—it may be a weakness, but it is one that is official—I cannot help imagining that a bailiff cuts but a shabby figure before the people in the presence of so many gods and goddesses. To own to thee the truth, I rejoice that he who cometh, cometh as he doth. Hast letters of late date from Berne?"

"None; though report says there is like to be a change among some of those who fill public trusts."

"So much the worse!" growled the bailiff. "Is it to be expected that men who never did an hour's duty in a charge can acquit themselves like those who have, it might be said, sucked in practice with their mother's milk?"

"Aye; this is well enough for thee; but others say that even the Erlachs had a beginning."

"Himmel! Am I a heathen to deny this? As many beginnings as thou wilt, good Roger, but I like not thy ends. No doubt an Erlach is mortal like all of us, and even a created being; but a man is not a charge. Let the clay die, if thou wilt, but if thou wouldst have faithful or skilful servants, look to the true successor. But we will have none of this to-day. Hast many guests at Blonay?"

"Not one. I look for the company of Melchior de Willading and his daughter—and yet I like not the time! There are evil signs playing about the high peaks and in the neighborhood of the Dents since the sun has set!"

"Thou art ever in a storm up in thy castle there! The Leman was never more peaceable, and I should take it truly in evil part, were the rebellious lake to get into one of its fits of sudden anger with so precious a freight on its bosom."

"I do not think the Genfer See will regard even a bailiff's displeasure!" rejoined the Baron de Blonay, laughing. "I repeat it; the signs are suspicious. Let us consult the watermen, for it may be well to send a light-pulling boat to bring the travellers to land."

Roger de Blonay and the bailiff walked toward the little earthen mole that partially protects the roadstead of Vévey, and which is forever foaming and forever washing away before the storms of winter, in order to consult some of those who were believed to be expert in detecting the symptoms that pre-

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ceded any important changes of the atmosphere. The opinions were various. Most believed there would be a gust; but, as the Winkelried was known to be a new and well-built bark, and none could tell how much beyond her powers she had been loaded by the cupidity of Baptiste, and as it was generally thought the wind would be as likely to bring her up to her haven as be against her, there appeared no sufficient reason for sending off the boat; especially as it was believed the bark would be not only drier but safer than a smaller craft, should they be overtaken by the wind. This indecision, so common in cases of uncertainty, was the means of exposing Adelheid and her father to all those fearful risks they had just run.

When the night came on, the people of the town began to understand that the tempest would be grave to those who were obliged to encounter it, even in the best bark, on the Leman. The darkness added to the danger, for vessels had often run against the land by miscalculating their distances; and the lights were shown along the strand, by order of the bailiff, who manifested an interest so unusual in those on board the Winkelried, as to draw about them more than the sympathy that would ordinarily be felt for travellers in distress. Every exertion that the case admitted was made in their behalf, and the moment the state of the lake allowed, boats were sent off, in every possible direction, to their succor. But the Winkelried was running along the coast of Savoy ere any ventured forth, and the search proved fruitless. When the rumor spread, however, that a sail was to be discerned coming out from under the wide shadow of the opposite mountains, and that it was steering for La Tour de Peil, a village with a far safer harbor than that of Vévey, and but an arrow's flight from the latter town, crowds rushed to the spot. The instant it was known that the missing party was in her, the travellers were received with cheers of delight and cries of hearty greeting.

The bailiff and Roger de Blonay hastened forward to receive the Baron de Willading and his friends, who were carried in a tumultuous and joyful manner into the old castle that adorns the port, and from which, in truth, the latter derives its name. The Bernois noble was too much affected with the scenes through which he had so lately passed, and with the strong and ungovernable tenderness of Adelheid, who had wept over him as a mother sobs over her recovered child, to exchange greetings with him of Vaud, in the hearty, cordial manner that ordinarily characterized their meetings. Still their peculiar habits shone through the restraint.

"Thou seest me just rescued from the fishes of thy Leman, dear De Blonay," he said, squeezing the other's hand with emotion, as, leaning on his shoulder, they went into the château. "But for yonder brave youth, and as honest a mariner as ever floated on water, fresh or salt, all that is left of old Melchior de Willading would, at this moment, be of less value than the meanest férá in thy lake."

"God be praised that thou art as we see thee! We feared for thee, and boats are out at this moment in search of thy bark: but it has been wiser ordered. This brave young man, who, I see, is both a Swiss and a soldier, is doubly welcome among us—in the two characters just named, and as one that hath done thee and us so great a service."

Sigismund received the compliments which he so well merited with modesty. The bailiff, however, not content with making the usual felicitations, whispered in his ear that a service like this, rendered to one of its most esteemed nobles, would not be forgotten by the Councils on a proper occasion.

"Thou art happily arrived, Herr Melchior," he then added, aloud; "come as thou wilt, floating or sailing in air. We have thee among us none the worse for the accident, and we thank God, as Roger de Blonay has just so well observed. Our Abbaye is like to be a gallant ceremony, for divers gentlemen of name are in town, and I hear of more that are pricking forward among the mountains from countries beyond the Rhine. Hadst thou no other companions in the bark but these I see around us?"

"There is another, and I wonder that he is not here! 'Tis a noble Genoese, that thou hast often heard me name, Sire de Blonay, as one that I love. Gaetano Grimaldi is a name familiar to thee, or the words of friendship have been uttered in an idle ear."

"I have heard so much of the Italian that

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I can almost fancy him an old and tried acquaintance. When thou first returnedst from the Italian wars, thy tongue was never weary of recounting his praises: it was Gaetano said this—Gaetano thought thus—Gaetano did that! Surely he is not of thy company?"

"He, and no other! A lucky meeting on the quay of Genf brought us together again after a separation of full thirty years, and as if Heaven had reserved its trials for the occasion, we have been made to go through the late danger in company. I had him in my arms in that fearful moment, Roger, when the sky, and the mountains, and all of earth, even to that dear girl, were fading, as I thought forever, from my sight,—he, that had already been my partner in so many risks, who had bled for me, watched for me, ridden for me, and did all other things that love could prompt for me, was brought by Providence to be my companion in the awful strait through which I have just passed!"

While the Baron was still speaking, his friend entered with the quiet and dignified mien he always maintained, when it was not his pleasure to throw aside the reserve of high station, or when he yielded to the torrent of feeling that sometimes poured through his southern temperament, in a way to unsettle the deportment of mere convention. He was presented to Roger de Blonay and the bailiff, as the person just alluded to, and as the oldest and most tried of the friends of his introducer. His reception by the former was natural and warm, while the Herr Hofmeister was so particular in his professions of pleasure and respect, as to excite not only notice but surprise.

"Thanks, thanks, good Peterchen," said the Baron de Willading, for such was the familiar diminutive by which the bustling bailiff was usually addressed, by those who could take the liberty; "thanks, honest Peterchen; thy kindness to Gaetano is so much love shown to myself."

"I honor thy friends as thyself, Herr von Willading," returned the bailiff, "for thou hast a claim to the esteem of the bürgerschaft and all its servants; but the homage paid to the Signor Grimaldi is due on his own account. We are but poor Swiss, that dwell in the midst of wild mountains, little favored by the sun if ye will, and less known to the world; but we have our manners! A man that hath been intrusted with authority as long as I, were unfit for his trust did he not tell, as it might be by instinct, when he has those in his presence that are to be honored. Signor, the loss of Melchior von Willading before our haven, would have made the lake unpleasant to us all for months, not to say years; but had so great a calamity arrived as that of your death by means of our waters, I could have prayed that the mountains might fall into the basin, and bury the offending Leman under their rocks!"

Melchior de Willading and old Roger de Blonay laughed heartily at Peterchen's hyperbolical compliments; though it was quite plain that the worthy bailiff himself fancied he had said a clever thing.

"I thank you, signor, no less than my friend De Willading," returned the Genoese, a gleam of humor lighting his eye. "This courteous reception quite outdoes us of Italy; for I doubt if there be a man south of the Alps, who would be willing to condemn either of our seas to so overwhelming a punishment for a fault so venial, or at least so natural. I beg, however, that the lake may be pardoned; since, at the worst, it was but a secondary agent in the affair, and I doubt not it would have treated us as it treats all travellers, had we kept out of its embraces. The crime must be imputed to the winds, and as they are the offspring of the hills, I fear it will be found that these very mountains, to which you look for retribution, will be convicted at last as the true devisers and abettors of the plot against our lives."

The bailiff chuckled and simpered like a man pleased equally with his own wit and with that he had excited in others, and the discourse changed; though throughout the night, as indeed was the fact on all other occasions during his visit, the Signor Grimaldi received from him so marked and particular attentions, as to create a strong sentiment in favor of the Italian among those who had been chiefly accustomed to see Peterchen enact the busy, important, dignified, local functionary.

Attention was now paid to the first wants of the travellers, who had great need of refreshments after the fatigues and exposure

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of the day. To obtain the latter, Roger de Blonay insisted that they should ascend to his castle, in whose grate the welcome beacon still blazed. By means of *chars-à-banc*, the peculiar vehicle of the country, the short distance was soon overcome, the bailiff, not a little to the surprise of the owner of the house, insisting on seeing the strangers safely housed within its walls. At the gate of Blonay, however, Peterchen took his leave, making a hundred apologies for his absence, on the ground of the extensive duties that had devolved on his shoulders in consequence of the approaching fête.

"We shall have a mild winter, for I have never known the Herr Hofmeister so courteous," observed Roger de Blonay, while showing his guests into the castle. "Thy Bernese authorities, Melchior, are little apt to be lavish of their compliments to us poor nobles of Vaud."

"Signor, you forget the interest of our friend," observed the laughing Genoese. "There are other and better bailiwicks, beyond a question, in the gift of the Councils, and the Signor de Willading has a loud voice in their disposal. Have I found a solution for this zeal?"

"Thou hast not," returned the Baron, "for Peterchen hath little hope beyond that of dying where he has lived, the deputed ruler of a small district. The worthy man should have more credit for a good heart, his own no doubt being touched at seeing those who are, as it may be, redeemed from the grave. I owe him grace for the kindness, and should a better thing really offer, and could my poor voice be of account, why, I do not say it should be silent; it is serving the public well to put men of these kind feelings into places of trust."

This opinion appeared very natural to the listeners, all of whom, with the exception of the Signor Grimaldi, joined in echoing the sentiment. The latter, more experienced in the windings of the human heart, or possessing some reasons known only to himself, merely smiled at the remarks that he heard, as if he thoroughly understood the difference between the homage that is paid to station, and that which a generous and noble nature is compelled to yield to its own impulses.

An hour later, the light repast was ended, and Roger de Blonay informed his guests that they would be well repaid for walking a short distance, by a look at the loveliness of the night. In sooth, the change was already so great that it was not easy for the imagination to convert the soft and smiling scene that lay beneath and above the towers of Blonay, into the dark vault and the angry lake from which they had so lately escaped.

Every cloud had already sailed far away toward the plains of Germany, and the moon had climbed so high above the ragged Dent de Jaman as to suffer its rays to stream into the basin of the Leman. A thousand pensive stars spangled the vault, images of the benign omnipotence which unceasingly pervades and governs the universe, whatever may be the local derangements or accidental struggles of the inferior agents. The foaming and rushing waves had gone down nearly as fast as they had arisen, and in their stead, remained myriads of curling ridges along which the glittering moonbeams danced, rioting with wild impunity on the surface of the placid sheet. Boats were out again, pulling for Savoy or the neighboring villages; and the whole view betokened the renewed confidence of those who trusted habitually to the fickle and blustering elements.

"There is a strong and fearful resemblance between the human passions and these hot and angry gusts of nature," observed the Signor Grimaldi, after they had stood silently regarding the scene for several musing minutes, "alike quick to be aroused and to be appeased; equally ungovernable while in the ascendant, and admitting the influence of a wholesome reaction, that brings a more sober tranquillity when the fit is over. Your northern phlegm may render the analogy less apparent, but it is to be found as well among the cooler temperaments of the Teutonic stock, as among us of warmer blood. Do not this placid hill-side, yon lake, and the starry heavens look as if they regretted their late unseemly violence, and wished to cheat the beholder into forgetfulness of their attack on our safety, as an impetuous but generous nature would repent it of the blow given in anger, or of the cutting speech that had escaped in a moment of spleen? What hast thou to say to my opinion, Signor Sigismund,

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for none know better than thou the quality of the tempest we have encountered?"

"Signor," answered the young soldier, modestly, "you forget this brave mariner, without whose coolness and forethought all would have been lost. He has come up to Blonay at our own request, but until now he has been overlooked."

Maso came forward at a signal from Sigismund, and stood before the party to whom he had rendered so signal aid, with a composure that was not easily disturbed.

"I have come up to the castle, signor, at your commands," he said, addressing the Genoese; "but, having my own affairs on hand, must now beg to know your pleasure?"

"We have, in sooth, been negligent of thy merit. On landing, my first thought was of thee, as thou knowest; but other things had caused me to forget thee. Thou art, like myself, an Italian?"

"Signor, I am."

"Of what country?"

"Of your own, signor; a Genoese, as I have said before."

The other remembered the circumstance, though it did not seem to please him. He looked around, as if to detect what others thought, and then continued his questions.

"A Genoese!" he repeated slowly: "if this be so, we should know something of each other. Hast ever heard of me, in thy frequent visits to the port?"

Maso smiled; at first he appeared disposed to be facetious; but a dark cloud passed over his swarthy lineaments, and he lost his pleasantry, in an air of thoughtfulness that struck his interrogator as singular.

"Signor," he said, after a pause, "most that follow my manner of life know something of your Eccellenza; if it is only to be questioned of this that I am here, I pray leave to be permitted to go my way."

"No, by San Francesco! thou quittest us not so unceremoniously. I am wrong to assume the manner of a superior with one to whom I owe my life, and am well answered. But there is a heavy account to be settled between us, and I will do something toward wiping out the balance, which is so greatly against me now; leaving thee to apply for a further statement when we shall both be again in our own Genoa."

The Signor Grimaldi had reached forth an arm, while speaking, and received a well-filled purse from his countryman and companion, Marcelli. This was soon emptied of its contents, a fair show of sequins, all of which were offered to the mariner without reservation. Maso looked coldly at the glittering pile, and by his hesitation, left a doubt whether he did not think the reward insufficient.

"I can tell thee it is but the present gage of further payment. At Genoa our account shall be fairly settled; but this is all that a traveller can prudently spare. Thou wilt come to me in our own town, and we will look to all thy interests."

"Signor, you offer that for which men do all acts, whether of good or of evil. They jeopard their souls for this very metal; mock at God's laws; overlook the right; trifle with justice, and become devils incarnate to possess it; and yet, though nearly penniless, I am so placed as to be compelled to refuse what you offer."

"I tell thee, Maso, that it shall be increased hereafter—or—we are not so poor as to go a-begging! Good Marcelli, empty thy hoards, and I will have recourse to Melchior de Willading's purse for our wants, until we can get nearer to our own supplies."

"And is Melchior de Willading to pass for nothing, in all this?" exclaimed the Baron; "put up thy gold, Gaetano, and leave me to satisfy the honest mariner for the present. At a later day, he can come to thee, in Italy; but here, on my own ground, I claim the right to be his banker."

"Signori," returned Maso, earnestly, and with more of gentle feeling than he was accustomed to betray, "you are both liberal beyond my desires, and but too well disposed for my poor wants. I have come up to the castle at your order, and to do you pleasure, but not in the hope to get money. I am poor; that it would be useless to deny, for appearances are against me"—here he laughed, his auditors thought in a manner that was forced—"but poverty and meanness are not always inseparable. You have more than suspected to-day that my life is free, and I admit it; but it is a mistake to believe that, because men quit the high-road which some call honesty, in any particular practice,

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they are without human feeling. I have been useful in saving your lives, signori, and there is more pleasure in the reflection, than I should find in having the means to earn twice the gold ye offer. Here is the signor capitano," he added, taking Sigismund by the arm, and dragging him forward, "lavish your favors on him, for no practice of mine could have been of use without his bravery. If ye give him all in your treasuries, even to its richest pearl, ye will do no more than reason."

As Maso ceased, he cast a glance towards the attentive, breathless Adelheid, that continued to utter his meaning even after the tongue was silent. The bright suffusion that covered the maiden's face was visible even by the pale moonlight, and Sigismund shrank back from his rude grasp in the manner in which the guilty retire from notice.

"These opinions are creditable to thee, Maso," returned the Genoese, affecting not to understand his more particular meaning, "and they excite a stronger wish to be thy friend. I will say no more on the subject at present, for I see thy humor. Thou wilt let me see thee at Genoa?"

The expression of Maso's countenance was inexplicable, but he retained his usual indifference of manner.

"Signor Gaetano," he said, using a mariner's freedom in the address, "there are nobles in Genoa that might better knock at the door of your palace than I; and there are those, too, in the city, that would gossip, were it known that you received such guests."

"This is tying thyself too closely to an evil and a dangerous trade. I suspect thee to be of the contraband, but surely it is not a pursuit so free from danger, of so much repute, or, judging by thy attire, of so much profit even, that thou needest be wedded to it for life. Means can be found to relieve thee from its odium, by giving thee a place in those customs with which thou hast so often trifled."

Maso laughed outright.

"So it is, signor, in this moral world of ours; he who would run a fair course in any particular trust has only to make himself dangerous to be brought up. Your thief-takers are desperate rogues out of business; your tide-waiter has got his art by cheating the revenue; and I have been in lands where it was said that all they who most fleeced the people began their calling as suffering patriots. The rule is firmly enough established without the help of my poor name, and by your leave, I will remain as I am; one that hath his pleasure in living amid risks, and who takes his revenge of the authorities by railing at them when defeated, and by laughing at them when in success."

"Young man, thou hast in thee the materials of a better life!"

"Signor, this may be true," answered Maso, whose countenance again grew dark; "we boast of being the lords of the creation, but the bark of poor Baptiste was not less master of its movements, in the late gust, than we are masters of our fortunes. Signor Grimaldi, I have in me the materials that make a man; but the laws, and the opinions, and the accursed strife of men have left me what I am. For the first fifteen years of my career, the church was to be my stepping-stone to a cardinal's hat, or a fat priory; but the briny sea-water washed out the necessary unction."

"Thou art better born than thou seemest—thou hast friends who should be grieved at this?"

The eye of Maso flashed, but he bent it aside, as if bearing down, by the force of an indomitable will, some sudden and fierce impulse.

"I was born of woman!" he said, with singular emphasis.

"And thy mother—is she not pained at thy present course—does she know of thy career?"

The haggard smile to which this question gave birth induced the Genoese to regret that he had put it. Maso evidently struggled to subdue some feeling which harrowed his very soul, and his success was owing to such a command of himself as men rarely obtain.

"She is dead," he answered, huskily; "she is a saint with the angels. Had she lived, I should never have been a mariner, and—and—" laying his hand on his throat, as if to keep down the sense of suffocation, he smiled, and added, laughingly,—"aye, and the good Winkelried would have been a wreck."

"Maso, thou must come to me at Genoa. I must see more of thee, and question thee further of thy fortunes. A fair spirit has

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been perverted in thy fall, and the friendly aid of one who is not without influence may still restore its tone."

The Signor Grimaldi spoke warmly, like one who sincerely felt regret, and his voice had all the melancholy and earnestness of such a sentiment. The truculent nature of Maso was touched by the show of interest, and a multitude of fierce passions were at once subdued. He approached the noble Genoese, and respectfully took his hand.

"Pardon the freedom, signor," he said more mildly, intently regarding the wrinkled and attenuated fingers, with the map-like tracery of veins, that he held in his own brown and hard palm; "this is not the first time that our flesh has touched each other, though it is the first time that our hands have joined. Let it now be in amity. A humor has come over me, and I would crave your pardon, venerable noble, for the freedom. Signor, you are aged, and honored, and stand high, doubtless, in Heaven's favor, as in that of man—grant me, then, your blessing, ere I go my way."

As Maso preferred this extraordinary request, he knelt with an air of so much reverence and sincerity as to leave little choice as to granting it. The Genoese was surprised, but not disconcerted. With perfect dignity and self-possession, and with a degree of feeling that was not unsuited to the occasion, the fruit of emotions so powerfully awakened, he pronounced the benediction. The mariner arose, kissed the hand which he still held, made a hurried sign of salutation to all, leaped down the declivity on which they stood, and vanished among the shadows of a copse.

Sigismund, who had witnessed this unusual scene with surprise, watched him to the last, and he saw, by the manner in which he dashed his hand across his eyes, that his fierce nature had been singularly shaken. On recovering his thoughts, the Signor Grimaldi, too, felt certain there had been no mockery in the conduct of their inexplicable preserver, for a hot tear had fallen on his hand ere it was liberated. He was himself strongly agitated by what had passed, and leaning on his friend, he slowly re-entered the gate of Blonay.

"This extraordinary demand of Maso's has brought up the sad image of my own poor son, dear Melchior," he said; "would to Heaven that he could have received this blessing, and that it might have been of use to him, in the sight of God! Nay, he may yet hear it—for, canst thou believe it, I have thought that Maso may be one of his lawless associates, and that some wild desire to communicate this scene has prompted the strange request I granted."

The discourse continued, but it became secret, and of the most confidential kind. The rest of the party soon sought their beds, though lamps were burning in the chambers of the two old nobles to a late hour of the night.

CHAPTER IX.

"Where are my Switzers? Let them guard the door: What is the matter?"—*Hamlet.*

THE American autumn, or fall, as we poetically and affectionately term this generous and mellow season among ourselves, is thought to be unsurpassed, in its warm and genial lustre, its bland and exhilarating airs, and its admirable constancy, by the decline of the year in nearly every other portion of the earth. Whether attachment to our own fair and generous land has led us to over-estimate its advantages or not, and bright and cheerful as our autumnal days certainly are, a fairer morning never dawned upon the Alleghanies than that which illumed the Alps, on the reappearance of the sun after the gust of the night which has been so lately described. As the day advanced, the scene grew gradually more lovely, until warm and glowing Italy itself could scarcely present a landscape more winning, or one possessing a fairer admixture of the grand and the soft, than that which greeted the eye of Adelheid de Willading, as, leaning on the arm of her father, she issued from the gate of Blonay upon its elevated and gravelled terrace.

It has already been said that this ancient and historical building stood against the bosom of the mountains, at the distance of a short league behind the town of Vévey. All the elevations of this region are so many spurs of the same vast pile, and that on which

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Blonay has now been seated from the earliest period of the middle ages belongs to that peculiar line of rocky ramparts which separates the Valais from the centre cantons of the confederation of Switzerland, and which is commonly known as the range of the Oberland Alps. This line of snow-crowned rocks terminates in perpendicular precipices on the very margin of the Leman, and forms, on the side of the lake, a part of that magnificent setting which renders the southeastern horn of its crescent so wonderfully beautiful. The upright natural wall that overhangs Villeneuve and Chillon stretches along the verge of the water, barely leaving room for a carriage-road, with here and there a cottage at its base, for the distance of two leagues, when it diverges from the course of the lake, and withdrawing inland, it is finally lost among the minor eminences of Fribourg. Every one has observed those sloping declivities, composed of the washing of torrents, the *débris* of precipices, and what may be termed the constant drippings of perpendicular eminences, and which lie like broad buttresses at their feet, forming a sort of foundation or basement for the superincumbent mass. Among the Alps, where nature has acted on so sublime a scale, and where all the proportions are duly observed, these *débris* of the high mountains frequently contain villages and towns, or form vast fields, vineyards, and pasturages, according to their elevation or their exposure toward the sun. It may be questioned, in strict geology, whether the variegated acclivity that surrounds Vévey, rich in villages and vines, hamlets and castles, has been thus formed, or whether the natural convulsions which expelled the upper rocks from the crust of the earth left their bases in the present broken and beautiful forms; but the fact is not important to the effect, which is that just named, and which gives rise to these vast ranges of rock secondary and fertile bases, that, in other regions, would be termed mountains of themselves.

The castle and family of Blonay, for both still exist, are among the oldest of Vaud. A square, rude tower, based upon a foundation of rock, one of those ragged masses that thrust their naked heads occasionally through the soil of the declivity, was the commencement of the hold. Other edifices have been reared around this nucleus in different ages, until the whole presents one of those peculiar and picturesque piles, that ornament so many both of the savage and of the softer sites of Switzerland.

The terrace toward which Adelheid and her father advanced was an irregular walk, shaded by venerable trees that had been raised near the principal or the carriage gate of the castle, on a ledge of those rocks that form the foundation of the buildings themselves. It had its parapet walls, its seats, its artificial soil, and its graveled *alleés*, as is usual with these antiquated ornaments; but it also had, what is better than these, one of the most sublime and lovely views that ever greeted human eyes. Beneath it lay the undulating and teeming declivity, rich in vines, and carpeted with sward, here dotted by hamlets, there park-like and rural with forest trees, while there was no quarter that did not show the roof of a château or the tower of some rural church. There is little of magnificence in Swiss architecture, which never much surpasses, and is, perhaps, generally inferior to our own; but the beauty and quaintness of the sites, the great variety of the surfaces, the hill-sides, and the purity of the atmosphere, supply charms that are peculiar to this country. Vévey lay at the water-side, many hundred feet lower, and seemingly on a narrow strand, though in truth enjoying ample space; while the houses of St. Saphorin, Corsier, Montreux, and of a dozen more villages, were clustered together, like so many of the compact habitations of wasps stuck against the mountains. But the principal charm was in the Leman. One who had never witnessed the lake in its fury, could not conceive the possibility of danger in the tranquil shining sheet that was now spread like a liquid mirror, for leagues beneath the eye. Some six or seven barks were in view, their sails drooping in negligent forms, as if disposed expressly to become models for the artist, their yards inclining as chance had cast them, and their hulls looming large, to complete the picture. To these near objects must be added the distant view, which extended to the Jura in one direction, and which in the other was bounded by the frontiers of Italy, whose aërial limits were to be traced in that region which appears to be-

long neither to heaven nor to earth, the abode of eternal frosts. The Rhone was shining, in spots, among the meadows of the Valais, for the elevation of the castle admitted of its being seen, and Adelheid endeavored to trace among the mazes of the mountains the valleys which led to those sunny countries, toward which they journeyed.

The sensations of both father and daughter, when they came beneath the leafy canopy of the terrace, were those of mute delight. It was evident, by the expression of their countenances, that they were in a favorable mood to receive pleasurable impressions; for the face of each was full of that quiet happiness which succeeds sudden and lively joy. Adelheid had been weeping; but, judging from the radiance of her eyes, the healthful and brightening bloom of her cheeks, and the struggling smiles that played about her ripe lips, the tears had been sweet, rather than painful. Though still betraying enough of physical frailty to keep alive the concern of all who loved her, there was a change for the better in her appearance, which was so sensible as to strike the least observant of those who lived in daily communication with the invalid.

"If pure and mild air, a sunny sky, and ravishing scenery, be what they see who cross the Alps, my father," said Adelheid, after they had stood a moment, gazing at the magnificent panorama, "why should the Swiss quit his native land? Is there in Italy aught more soft, more winning, or more healthful than this?"

"This spot has often been called the Italy of our mountains. The fig ripens near yonder village of Montreux, and, open to the morning sun while it is sheltered by the precipices above, the whole of that shore well deserves its happy reputation. Still they whose spirits require diversion, and whose constitutions need support, generally prefer to go into countries where the mind has more occupation, and where a greater variety of employments help the climate and nature to complete the cure."

"But thou forgettest, father, it is agreed between us that I am now to become strong, and active, and laughing, as we used to be at Willading, when I first grew into womanhood."

"If I could but see those days again, darling, my own closing hours would be calm as those of a saint—though Heaven knows I have little pretension to that blessed character in any other particular."

"Dost thou not count a quiet conscience and a sure hope as something, father?"

"Have it as thou wilt, girl. Make a saint of me, or a bishop, or a hermit, if thou wilt; the only reward I ask is, to see thee smiling and happy, as thou never failedst to be during the first eighteen years of thy life. Had I foreseen that thou wert to return from my good sister so little like thyself, I would have forbidden the visit, much as I love her, and all that are hers. But the wisest of us are helpless mortals, and scarce know our wants from hour to hour. Thou saidst, I think, that this brave Sigismund honestly declared his belief that my consent could never be given to one who had so little to boast of, in the way of birth and fortune? There was, at least, good sense, and modesty, and right feeling, in the doubt, but he should have thought better of my heart."

"He said this," returned Adelheid, in a timid and slightly trembling voice, though it was quite apparent, by the confiding expression of her eye, that she had no longer any secret from her parent. "He had too much honor to wish to win the daughter of a noble without the knowledge and approbation of her friends."

"That the boy should love thee, Adelheid, is natural; it is an additional proof of his own merit—but that he should distrust my affection and justice is an offence that I can scarce forgive. What are ancestry and wealth to thy happiness?"

"Thou forget'st, dear sir, he is yet to learn that my happiness, in any measure, depends on his."

Adelheid spoke quickly and with warmth.

"He knew I was a father, and that thou art an only child; one of his good sense and right way of thinking should have better understood the feelings of a man in my situation, than to doubt his natural affection."

"As he has never been the parent of an only daughter, father," answered the smiling Adelheid, for, in her present mood, smiles came easily, "he may not have felt or antic-

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ipated all that thou imagin'st. He knew the prejudices of the world on the subject of noble blood, and they are few, indeed, that, having much, are disposed to part with it to him who hath little."

"The lad reasoned more like an old miser than a young soldier, and I have a great mind to let him feel my displeasure for thinking so meanly of me. Have we not Willading, with all its fair lands, besides our rights in the city, that we need go begging money of others, like needy mendicants! Thou hast been in the conspiracy against my character, girl, or such a fear could not have given either uneasiness for a moment."

"I never thought, father, that thou wouldst reject him on account of poverty, for I knew our own means sufficient for all our wants; but I did believe that he who could not boast the privileges of nobility might fail to gain thy favor."

"Are we not a republic?—is not the right of the bürgerschaft the one essential right in Berne—why should I raise obstacles about that on which the laws are silent?"

Adelheid listened, as a female of her years would be apt to listen to words so grateful, with a charmed ear; and yet she shook her head, in a way to express an incredulity that was not altogether free from apprehension.

"For thy generous forgetfulness of old opinions in behalf of my happiness, dearest father," she resumed, the tears starting unbidden to her thoughtful blue eye, "I thank thee fervently. It is true that we are inhabitants of a republic, but we are not the less noble."

"Dost thou turn against thyself, and hunt up reasons why I should not do that which thou hast just acknowledged to be so necessary to prevent thee from following thy brothers and sisters to their early graves?"

The blood rushed in a torrent to the face of Adelheid, for though, weeping and in the moment of tender confidence which succeeded her thanksgivings for the Baron's safety, she had thrown herself on his bosom, and confessed that the hopelessness of the sentiments with which she met the declared love of Sigismund was the true cause of the apparent malady that had so much alarmed her friends, the words that had flowed spontaneously from her heart, in so tender a scene, had never appeared to her to convey a meaning so strong, or one so wounding to virgin pride, as that which her father, in the strength of his masculine habits, had now given them.

"In God's mercy, father, I shall live, whether united to Sigismund or not, to smooth thine own decline and to bless thy old age. A pious daughter will never be torn so cruelly from one to whom she is the last and only stay. I may mourn this disappointment, and foolishly wish, perhaps, it might have been otherwise; but ours is not a house of which the maidens die for their inclinations in favor of any youths, however deserving!"

"Noble or simple," added the Baron, laughing, for he saw that his daughter spoke in a sudden pique, rather than from her excellent heart. Adelheid, whose good sense and quick recollections instantly showed her the weakness of this little display of female feeling, laughed faintly in her turn, though she repeated his words as if to give still more emphasis to her own.

"This will not do, my daughter. They who profess the republican doctrine should not be too rigid in their constructions of privileges. If Sigismund be not noble, it will not be difficult to obtain for him that honorable distinction, and in failure of main line, he may bear the name and sustain the honors of our family. In any case he will become of the bürgerschaft, and that of itself will be all that is required in Berne."

"In Berne, father," returned Adelheid, who had so far forgotten the recent movement of pride as to smile on her fond and indulgent parent, though, yielding to the waywardness of the happy, she continued to trifle with her own feelings—"it is true. The bürgerschaft will be sufficient for all the purposes of office and political privileges, but will it suffice for the opinions of our equals, for the prejudices of society, or for your own perfect contentment, when the freshness of gratitude shall have passed?"

"Thou puttest these questions, girl, as if employed to defeat thine own cause. Dost not truly love the boy, after all?"

"On this subject, I have spoken sincerely and as became thy child," frankly returned Adelheid. "He saved my life from imminent peril, as he has now saved thine, and

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although my aunt, fearful of thy displeasure, would not that thou shouldst hear the tale, her prohibition could not prevent gratitude from having its way. I have told thee that Sigismund has declared his feelings, although he nobly abstained from even asking a return, and I should not have been my mother's child, could I have remained entirely indifferent to so much worth united to a service so great. What I have said of our prejudices is, then, rather for your reflection, dearest sir, than for myself. I have thought much of all this, and am ready to make any sacrifice to pride, and to bear all the remarks of the world, in order to discharge a debt to one to whom I owe so much. But, while it is natural, perhaps unavoidable, that I should feel thus, thou art not necessarily to forget the other claims upon thee. It is true that, in one sense, we are all to each other, but there is a tyrant that will scarcely let any escape from his reign; I mean opinion. Let us not then deceive ourselves—though we of Berne affect the republic, and speak much of liberty, it is a small state, and the influence of those that are larger and more powerful among our neighbors rules in everything that touches opinion. A noble is as much a noble in Berne, in all but what the law bestows, as he is in the Empire—and thou knowest we come of the German root, which has struck deep into these prejudices."

The Baron de Willading had been much accustomed to defer to the superior mind and more cultivated understanding of his daughter, who, in the retirement of her father's castle, had read and reflected far more than her years would have probably permitted in the busier scenes of the world. He felt the justice of her remark, and they had walked the entire length of the terrace in profound silence, before he could summon the ideas necessary to make a suitable answer.

"The truth of what thou sayest is not to be denied," he at length said, "but it may be palliated. I have many friends in the German courts, and favors may be had; letters of nobility will give the youth the station he wants, after which he can claim thy hand without offence to any opinions, whether of Berne or elsewhere."

"I doubt if Sigismund will willingly become a party to this expedient. Our own nobility is of ancient origin; it dates from a period anterior to the existence of Berne as a city, and is much older than our institutions. I remember to have heard him say, that when a people refused to bestow these distinctions themselves, their citizens can never receive them from others without a loss of dignity and character, and one of his moral firmness might hesitate to do what he thinks wrong for a boon so worthless as that we offer."

"By the soul of William Tell! should the unknown peasant dare—— But he is a brave boy, and twice has he done the last service to my race! I love him, Adelheid, little less than thyself; and we will win him over to our purpose gently, and by degrees. A maiden of thy beauty and years, to say nothing of thy other qualities, thy name, the lands of Willading, and the rights of Berne, are matters after all not to be lightly refused by a nameless soldier who hath naught——"

"But his courage, his virtues, his modesty, and his excellent sense, father!"

"Thou wilt not let me have the naked satisfaction of vaunting my own wares! I see Gaetano Grimaldi making signs at his window, as if he were about to come forth; go thou to thy chamber, that I may discourse of this troublesome matter with that excellent friend; in good season thou shalt know the result."

Adelheid kissed the hand that she held in her own, and left him with a thoughtful air. As she descended from the terrace, it was not with the same elastic step as she had come up half an hour before.

Early deprived of her mother, this strong-minded but delicate girl had long been accustomed to make her father a confidant of all her hopes, thoughts, and pictures of the future. Owing to her peculiar circumstances, she would have had less hesitation than is usual to her sex in avowing to her parent any of her attachments; but a dread that the declaration might conduce to his unhappiness, without in any manner favoring her own cause, had hitherto kept her silent. Her acquaintance with Sigismund had been long and intimate. Rooted esteem and deep respect lay at the bottom of her sentiments, which were, however, so lively as to have chased the rose from her cheek in the en-

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deavor to forget them, and to have led her sensitive father to apprehend that she was suffering under that premature decay which had already robbed him of his other children. There was in truth no serious ground for this apprehension, so natural to one in the place of the Baron de Willading; for, until thought and reflection paled her cheek, a more blooming maiden than Adelheid, or one that united more perfect health with feminine delicacy, did not dwell among her native mountains. She had quietly consented to the Italian journey, in the expectation that it might serve to divert her mind from brooding over what she had long considered hopeless, and with the natural desire to see lands so celebrated, but not under any mistaken opinions of her own situation. The presence of Sigismund, so far as she was concerned, was purely accidental, although she could not prevent the pleasing idea from obtruding—an idea so grateful to her womanly affections and maiden pride—that the young soldier, who was in the service of Austria, and who had become known to her in one of his frequent visits to his native land, had gladly seized this favorable occasion to return to his colors. Circumstances, which it is not necessary to recount, had enabled Adelheid to make the youth acquainted with her father, though the interdictions of her aunt, whose imprudence had led to the accident which nearly proved so fatal, and from whose consequences she had been saved by Sigismund, prevented her from explaining all the causes she had for showing him respect and esteem. Perhaps the manner in which this young and imaginative though sensible girl was compelled to smother a portion of her feelings gave them intensity, and hastened that transition of sentiment from gratitude to affection, which, in another case, might have only been produced by a more open and prolonged association. As it was, she scarcely knew herself how irretrievably her happiness was bound up in that of Sigismund, though she had so long cherished his image in most of her day-dreams, and had unconsciously admitted his influence over her mind and hopes, until she learned that they were reciprocated.

The Signor Grimaldi appeared on one end of the terrace as Adelheid de Willading descended at the other. The old nobles had separated late on the previous night, after a private and confidential communication that had shaken the soul of the Italian, and drawn strong and sincere manifestations of sympathy from his friend. Though so prone to sudden shades of melancholy, there was a strong touch of the humorous in the native character of the Genoese, which came so quick upon his more painful recollections, as greatly to relieve their weight, and to render him, in appearance at least, a happy, while the truth would have shown that he was a sorrowing, man. He had been making his orisons with a grateful heart, and he now came forth into the genial mountain air like one who had relieved his conscience of a heavy debt. Like most laymen of the Catholic persuasion, he thought himself no longer bound to maintain a grave and mortified exterior, when worship and penitence were duly observed, and he joined his friend with a cheerfulness of air and voice that an ascetic or a puritan might have attributed to levity, after the scenes through which he had so lately passed.

"The Virgin and San Francesco keep thee in mind, old friend!" said the Signor Grimaldi, cordially kissing the two cheeks of the Baron de Willading. "We both have reason to remember their care, though, heretic as thou art, I doubt not that thou hast already found some other mediators to thank, that we now stand on this solid terrace of the Signor de Blonay, instead of being worthless clay at the bottom of yonder treacherous lake."

"I thank God for this, as for all his mercies—for thy life, Gaetano, as well as for mine own."

"Thou art right, thou art right, good Melchior; 'twas no affair for any but Him who holds the universe in the hollow of His hand, in good faith, for a minute later would have gathered both with our fathers. Still thou wilt permit me, Catholic as I am, to remember the intercessors on whom I called in the moment of extremity."

"This is a subject on which we have never agreed, and on which we probably never shall," answered the Bernese, with somewhat of the reserve of one conscious of a stronger dissidence than he wished to express, as they turned and commenced their walk up and

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down the terrace, "though I believe it is the only matter of difference that ever existed between us."

"Is it not extraordinary," returned the Genoese, "that men should consort together in good and evil, bleed for each other, love each other, do all acts of kindness to each other, as thou and I have done, Melchior, nay, be in the last extremity, and feel more agony for the friend than for one's self, and yet entertain such opinions of their respective creeds, as to fancy the unbeliever in the devil's claws all this time, and to entertain a latent distrust that the very soul which, in all other matters, is deemed so noble and excellent, is to be everlastingly damned for the want of certain opinions and formalities that we ourselves have been taught to think essential?"

"To tell the truth," returned the Swiss, rubbing his forehead like a man who wished to brighten up his ideas, as one would brighten old silver, by friction; "this subject, as thou well knowest, is not my strong side. Luther and Calvin, with other sages, discovered that it was weakness to submit to dogmas, without close examination, merely because they were venerable, and they winnowed the wheat from the chaff. This we call a reform. It is enough for me that men so wise were satisfied with their researches and changes, and I feel little inclination to disturb a decision that has now received the sanction of nearly two centuries of practice. To be plain with thee, I hold it discreet to reverence the opinions of my fathers."

"Though it would seem not of thy grandfathers," said the Italian, dryly, but in perfect good humor. "By San Francesco! thou wouldst have made a worthy cardinal, had chance brought thee into the world fifty leagues further south, or west, or east. But this is the way with the world, whether it be your Turk, your Hindoo, or your Lutheran, and I fear it is much the same with the children of St. Peter, too. Each has his arguments for faith, or politics, or any interest that may be named, which he uses like a hammer to knock down the bricks of his opponent's reasons, and when he finds himself in the other's intrenchments, why, he gathers together the scattered materials in order to build a wall for his own protection. Then what was oppression yesterday is justifiable defence to-day; fanaticism becomes logic; and credulity and pliant submission get, in two centuries, to be deference to the venerable opinion of our fathers! But let it go —thou wert speaking of thanking God, and in that, Roman though I am, I fervently and devoutly join with or without saints' intercession."

The honest Baron did not like his friend's allusions, though they were much too subtle for his ready comprehension, for the intellect of the Swiss was a little frosted by constant residence among snows and in full view of glaciers, and it wanted the volatile play of the Genoese's fancy, which was apt to expand like air rarefied by the warmth of the sun. This difference of temperament, however, so far from lessening their mutual kindness, was, most probably, the real cause of its existence, since it is well known that friendship, like love, is more apt to be generated by qualities that vary a little from our own than by a perfect homogeneity of character and disposition, which is more liable to give birth to rivalry and contention, than when each party has some distinct capital of his own on which to adventure, and with which to keep alive the interest of him who, in that particular feature, may be but indifferently provided. All that is required for a perfect community of feeling, is a mutual recognition of, and a common respect for, certain great moral rules, without which there can exist no esteem between the upright. The alliance of knaves depends on motives so hackneyed and obvious that we abstain from any illustration of its principle as a work of supererogation. The Signor Grimaldi and Melchior de Willading were both very upright and justly-minded men, as men go, in intention at least, and their opposite peculiarities and opinions had served, during hot youth, to keep alive the interest of their communications, and were not likely, now that time had mellowed their feelings and brought so many recollections to strengthen the tie, to overturn what they had been originally the principal instruments in creating.

"Of thy readiness to thank God, I have never doubted," answered the Baron, when his friend had ended the remark just re-

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corded, "but we know that his favors are commonly shown to us here below by means of human instruments. Ought we not, therefore, to manifest another sort of gratitude in favor of the individual who was so serviceable in last night's gust?"

"Thou meanest my untractable countryman? I have bethought me much since we separated of his singular refusal, and hope still to find the means of conquering his obstinacy."

"I hope thou may'st succeed, and thou well know'st that I am always to be counted on as an auxiliary. But he was not in my thoughts at the instant; there is still another who nobly risked more than the mariner in our behalf, since he risked life."

"This is beyond question, and I have already reflected much on the means of doing him good. He is a soldier of fortune, I learn, and if he will take service in Genoa, I will charge myself with the care of his preferment. Trouble not thyself, therefore, concerning the fortunes of young Sigismund; thou knowest my means, and canst not doubt my will."

The Baron cleared his throat, for he had a secret reluctance to reveal his own favorable intentions toward the young man, the last lingering feeling of worldly pride, and the consequence of prejudices which were then universal, and which are even now far from being extinct. A vivid picture of the horrors of the past night luckily flashed across his mind, and the good genius of his young preserver triumphed.

"Thou knowest the youth is a Swiss," he said, "and, in virtue of the tie of country, I claim at least an equal right to do him good."

"We will not quarrel for precedence in this matter, but thou wilt do well to remember that I possess especial means to push his interests,—means that thou canst not by possibility use."

"That is not proved," interrupted the Baron de Willading. "I have not thy particular station, it is true, Signor Gaetano, nor thy political power, nor thy princely fortune; but, poor as I am in these, there is a boon in my keeping that is worth them all, and which will be more acceptable to the boy, or I much mistake his mettle, than any favors thou hast named or canst name."

The Signor Grimaldi had pursued his walk, with eyes thoughtfully fastened on the ground; but he now raised them, in surprise, to the countenance of his friend, as if to ask an explanation. The Baron was not only committed by what had escaped him, but he was warming with opposition, for the best may frequently do very excellent things, under the influence of motives of but a very indifferent aspect.

"Thou knowest I have a daughter," resumed the Swiss firmly, determined to break the ice at once, and expose a decision which he feared his friend might deem a weakness.

"Thou hast; and a fairer, or a modester, or a tenderer, and yet, unless my judgment err, a firmer at need, is not to be found among all the excellent of her excellent sex. But thou wouldst scarce think of bestowing Adelheid in reward for such a service on one so little known, or without her wishes being consulted?"

"Girls of Adelheid's birth and breeding are ever ready to do what is meet to maintain the honor of their families. I deem gratitude to be a debt that must not stand long uncancelled against the name of Willading."

The Genoese looked grave, and it was evident he listened to his friend with something like displeasure.

"We who have so nearly passed through life, good Melchior," he said, "should know its difficulties and its hazards. The way is weary, and it has need of all the solace that affection and a community of feeling can yield to lighten its cares. I have never liked this heartless manner of trafficking in the tenderest ties, to uphold a failing line or a failing fortune; and better it were that Adelheid should pass her days unwooed in thy ancient castle, than give her hand under any sudden impulse of sentiment, not less than under a cold calculation of interest. Such a girl, my friend, is not to be bestowed without much care and reflection."

"By the mass! to use one of thine own favorite oaths, I wonder to hear thee talk thus!—thou, whom I knew a hot-blooded Italian, jealous as a Turk, and maintaining at thy rapier's point that women were like the steel of thy sword, so easily tarnished by rust, or evil breath, or neglect, that no father or brother could be easy on the score of honor,

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until the last of his name was well wedded, and that, too, to such as the wisdom of her advisers should choose! I remember thee once saying thou couldst not sleep soundly till thy sister was a wife or a nun.'

"This was the language of boyhood and thoughtless youth, and bitterly rebuked have I been for having used it. I wived a beauteous and noble virgin, De Willading; but I much fear that, while my fair conduct in her behalf won her respect and esteem, I was too late to win her love. It is a fearful thing to enter on the solemn and grave ties of married life, without enlisting in the cause of happiness the support of the judgment, the fancy, the tastes, with the feelings that are dependent on them, and, more than all, those wayward inclinations, whose workings too often baffle human foresight. If the hopes of the ardent and generous themselves are deceived in the uncertain lottery of wedlock, the victim will struggle hard to maintain the delusion; but when the calculations of others are patent to the evil, a natural inducement, that comes of the devil, I fear, prompts us to aggravate, instead of striving to lessen the evil."

"Thou dost not speak of wedlock as one who found the condition happy, poor Gaetano?"

"I have told thee what I fear was but too true," returned the Genoese, with a heavy sigh. "My birth, vast means, and I trust a fair name, induced the kinsmen of my wife to urge her to a union, that I have since had reason to fear her feelings did not lead her to form. I had a terrible ally, too, in the acknowledged unworthiness of him who had captivated her young fancy, and whom, as age brought reflection, her reason condemned. I was accepted, therefore, as a cure to a bleeding heart and broken peace, and my office, at the best, was not such as a good man could desire, or a proud man tolerate. The unhappy Angiolina died in giving birth to her first child, the unhappy son of whom I have told thee so much. She found peace at last in the grave!"

"Thou hadst not time to give thy manly tenderness and noble qualities an opportunity; else, my life on it, she would have come to love thee, Gaetano, as all love thee who know thee!" returned the Baron, warmly.

"Thanks, my kind friend! but beware of making marriage a mere convenience. There may be folly in calling each truant inclination that deep sentiment and secret sympathy which firmly knits heart to heart, and doubtless a common fortune may bind the worldly-minded, together; but this is not the holy union which keeps noble qualities in a family, and which fortifies against the seductions of a world that is already too strong for honesty. I remember to have heard from one that understood his fellow-creatures well, that marriages of mere propriety tend to rob woman of her greatest charm, that of superiority to the vulgar feeling of worldly calculations, and that all communities in which they prevail become, of necessity, selfish beyond the natural limits, and eventually corrupt."

"This may be true;—but Adelheid loves the youth."

"Ha! This changes the complexion of the affair. How dost thou know this?"

"From her own lips. The secret escaped her, under the warmth and sincerity of feeling that the late events so naturally excited."

"And Sigismund!—he has thy approbation?—for I will not suppose that one like thy daughter yielded her affections unsolicited."

"He has—that is—he has. There is what the world will be apt to call an obstacle, but it shall count for nothing with me. The youth is not noble."

"The objection is serious, my honest friend. It is not wise to tax human infirmity too much, where there is sufficient to endure from causes that cannot be removed. Wedlock is a precarious experiment, and all unusual motives for disgust should be cautiously avoided. I would he were noble."

"The difficulty shall be removed by the Emperor's favor. Thou hast princes in Italy, too, that might be prevailed on to do us this grace, at need?"

"What is the youth's origin and history, and by what means has a daughter of thine been placed in a situation to love one that is simply born?"

"Sigismund is a Swiss, and of a family of Bernese burghers, I should think, though, to confess the truth, I know little more than that he has passed several years in foreign service, and that he saved my daughter's life from one of our mountain accidents, some

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two years since, as he has now saved thine and mine. My sister, near whose castle the acquaintance commenced, permitted the intercourse, which it would now be too late to think of prohibiting. And, to speak honestly, I begin to rejoice the boy is what he is, in order that our readiness to receive him to our arms may be the more apparent. If the young fellow were the equal of Adelheid in other things, as he is in person and character, he would have too much in his favor. No, by the faith of Calvin!—him whom thou stylest a heretic—I think I rejoice that the boy is not noble!"

"Have it as thou wilt," returned the Genoese, whose countenance continued to express distrust and thought, for his own experience had made him wary on the subject of doubtful or ill-assorted alliances; "let his origin be what it may, he shall not need gold. I charge myself with seeing that the lands of Willading shall be fairly balanced: and here comes our hospitable host to be witness of the pledge."

Roger de Blonay advanced upon the terrace to greet his guests, as the Signor Grimaldi concluded. The three old men continued their walk for an hour longer, discussing the fortunes of the young pair, for Melchior de Willading was as little disposed to make a secret of his intentions with one of his friends as with the other.

CHAPTER X.

——"But I have not the time to pause
Upon these gewgaws of the heart."—WERNER.

THOUGH the word castle is of common use in Europe, as applied to ancient baronial edifices, the thing itself is very different in style, extent, and cost, in different countries. Security, united to dignity and the means of accommodating a train of followers suited to the means of the noble, being the common object, the position and defences of the place necessarily varied according to the general aspect of the region in which it stood. Thus ditches and other broad expanses of water were much depended on in all low countries, as in Flanders, Holland, parts of Germany, and much of France; while hills, spurs, mountains, and more especially the summits of conical rocks, were sought in Switzerland, Italy, and wherever else these natural means of protection could readily be found. Other circumstances, such as climate, wealth, the habits of a people, and the nature of the feudal rights, also served greatly to modify the appearance and extent of the building. The ancient hold in Switzerland was originally little more than a square solid tower, perched upon a rock, with turrets at its angles. Proof against fire from without, it had ladders to mount from floor to floor, and often contained its beds in the deep recesses of the windows, or in alcoves wrought in the massive wall. As greater security or greater means enabled, offices and constructions of more importance arose around its base, inclosing a court. These necessarily followed the formation of the rock, until, in time, the confused and inartificial piles, which are now seen mouldering on so many of the minor spurs of the Alps, were created.

As is usual in all ancient holds, the Rittersaal—the Salle des Chevaliers—or the knights' hall of Blonay, as it is differently called in different languages, was both the largest and most laboriously decorated apartment of the edifice. It was no longer in the rude jail-like keep that grew, as it were, from the living rock, on which it had been reared with so much skill as to render it difficult to ascertain where nature ceased and art commenced; but it had been transferred, a century before the occurrences related in our tale, to a more modern portion of the buildings that formed the southeastern angle of the whole construction.

The room was spacious, square, simple, for such is the fashion of the country, and lighted by windows that looked on one side toward Valais, and on the other over the whole of the irregular, but lovely declivity, to the margin of the Leman, and along that beautiful sheet, embracing hamlet, village, city, castle, and purple mountain, until the view was limited by the hazy Jura. The window on the latter side of the knights' hall had an iron balcony at a giddy height from the ground, and in this airy lookout Adelheid had taken her seat, when, after quitting her father, she mounted to the apartment common to all the guests of the castle.

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We have already alluded generally to the personal appearance and to the moral qualities of the Baron de Willading's daughter, but we now conceive it necessary to make the reader more intimately acquainted with one who is destined to act no mean part in the incidents of our tale.

It has been said that she was pleasing to the eye, but her beauty was of a kind that depended more on expression, on a union of character with feminine grace, than on the vulgar lines of regularity and symmetry. While she had no feature that was defective, she had none that was absolutely faultless, though all were combined with so much harmony, and the soft expression of the mild blue eye accorded so well with the gentle play of a sweet mouth, that the soul of their owner seemed ready at all times to appear through these ingenuous tell-tales of her thoughts. Still, maidenly reserve sat in constant watch over all, and it was when the spectator thought himself most in communion with her spirit, that he most felt its pure and correcting influence. Perhaps a cast of high intelligence, of a natural power to discriminate, which much surpassed the limited means accorded to females of that age, contributed their share to hold those near her in respect, and served in some degree as a mild and wise repellent, to counteract the attractions of her gentleness and candor. In short, one cast unexpectedly in her society would not have been slow to infer, and he would have decided correctly, that Adelheid de Willading was a girl of warm and tender affections, of a playful but regulated fancy, of a firm and lofty sense of all her duties, whether natural or merely the result of social obligations; of melting pity, and yet of a habit and quality to think and act for herself, in all those cases in which it was fitting for a maiden of her condition and years to assume such self-control.

It was now more than a year since Adelheid had become fully sensible of the force of her attachment for Sigismund Steinbach, and during all that time she had struggled hard to overcome a feeling which she believed could lead to no happy result. The declaration of the young man himself, a declaration that was extorted involuntarily and in a moment of powerful passion, was accompanied by an admission of its uselessness and folly, and it first opened her eyes to the state of her own feelings. Though she had listened, as all of her sex will listen, even when the passion is hopeless, to such words coming from lips they love, it was with a self-command that enabled her to retain her own secret, and with a settled and pious resolution to do that which she believed to be her duty to herself, to her father, and to Sigismund. From that hour, she ceased to see him, unless under circumstances when it would have drawn suspicion on her motives to refuse, and while she never appeared to forget her heavy obligations to the youth, she firmly denied herself the pleasure of even mentioning his name when it could be avoided. But of all ungrateful and reluctant tasks, that of striving to forget is the least likely to succeed. Adelheid was sustained only by her sense of duty and the desire not to disappoint her father's wishes, to which habit and custom had given nearly the force of law with maidens of her condition, though her reason and judgment no less than her affections were both strongly enlisted on the other side. Indeed, with the single exception of the general unfitness of a union between two of unequal stations, there was nothing to discredit her choice, if that may be termed choice which, after all, was more the result of spontaneous feeling and secret sympathy than of any other cause, unless it were a certain equivocal reserve, and a manifest uneasiness, whenever allusion was made to the early history and to the family of the soldier. The sensitiveness on the part of Sigismund had been observed and commented on by others as well as by herself, and it had been openly ascribed to the mortification of one who had been thrown by chance into an intimate association that was much superior to what he was entitled to maintain by birth; a weakness but too common, and which few have strength of mind to resist, or sufficient pride to overcome. The intuitive watchfulness of affection, however, led Adelheid to a different conclusion; she saw that he never affected to conceal, while with equal good taste he abstained from obtrusive allusions to the humble nature of his origin, but she also perceived that there were points of his previous history on which he was acutely sensitive, and which at first

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she feared must be attributed to the consciousness of acts that his clear perception of moral truth condemned, and which he could wish forgotten. For some time Adelheid clung to this discovery as to a healthful and proper antidote to her own truant inclinations, but native rectitude banished a suspicion which had no sufficient ground, as equally unworthy of them both. The effects of a ceaseless mental struggle, and of the fruitlessness of her efforts to overcome her tenderness in behalf of Sigismund, have been described in the fading of her bloom, in the painful solicitude of a countenance naturally so sweet, and in the unsettled melancholy of her playful and mellow eye. These were the real causes of the journey undertaken by her father, and in truth of most of the other events which we are about to describe.

The prospect of the future had undergone a sudden change. The color, though more the effect of excitement than of returning health—for the tide of life, when rudely checked, does not resume its currents at the first breath of happiness—again brightened her cheek and imparted brilliancy to her looks, and smiles stole easily to those lips which had long been growing pallid with anxiety. She leaned forward from the balcony, and never before had the air of her native mountains seemed so balmy and healing. At that moment the subject of her thoughts appeared on the verdant declivity, among the luxuriant nut-trees that shade the natural lawn of Blonay. He saluted her respectfully, and pointed to the glorious panorama of the Leman. The heart of Adelheid beat violently; she struggled for an instant with her fears and her pride, and then, for the first time in her life, she made a signal that she wished him to join her.

Notwithstanding the important service that the young soldier had rendered to the daughter of the Baron de Willading, and the long intimacy which had been its fruit, so great had been the reserve she had hitherto maintained, by placing a constant restraint on her inclinations, though the simple usages of Switzerland permitted greater familiarity of intercourse than was elsewhere accorded to maidens of rank, that Sigismund at first stood rooted to the ground, for he could not imagine the waving of the hand was meant for him. Adelheid saw his embarrassment, and the signal was repeated. The young man sprang up the acclivity with the rapidity of the wind, and disappeared behind the walls of the castle.

The barrier of reserve, so long and so successfully observed by Adelheid, was now passed, and she felt as if a few short minutes must decide her fate. The necessity of making a wide circuit in order to enter the court still afforded a little time for reflection, however, and this she endeavored to improve by collecting her thoughts and recovering her self-possession.

When Sigismund entered the knights' hall, he found the maiden still seated near the open window of the balcony, pale and serious, but perfectly calm, and with such an expression of radiant happiness in her countenance as he had not seen reigning in those sweet lineaments for many painful months. The first feeling was that of pleasure at perceiving how well she bore the alarms and dangers of the past night. This pleasure he expressed, with the frankness admitted by the habits of the Germans.

"Thou wilt not suffer, Adelheid, by the exposure on the lake!" he said, studying her face until the tell-tale blood stole to her very temples.

"Agitation of the mind is a good antidote to the consequences of bodily exposure. So far from suffering by what has passed, I feel stronger to-day and better able to endure fatigue, than at any time since we came through the gates of Willading. This balmy air, to me, seems Italy, and I see no necessity to journey further in search of what they said was necessary to my health, agreeable objects and a generous sun."

"You will not cross the St. Bernard!" he exclaimed, in a tone of disappointment.

Adelheid smiled, and he felt encouraged, though the smile was ambiguous. Notwithstanding the really noble sincerity of the maiden's disposition, and her earnest desire to set his heart at ease, nature, or habit, or education, for we scarcely know to which the weakness ought to be ascribed, tempted her to avoid a direct explanation.

"Why need one desire aught that is more lovely than this?" she answered, evasively. "Here is a warm air, such a scene as Italy can

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scarcely surpass, and a friendly roof. The experience of the last twenty-four hours gives little encouragement for attempting the St. Bernard, notwithstanding the fair promises of hospitality and welcome that have been so liberally held out by the good canon."

"Thy eye contradicts thy tongue, Adelheid; for thou art happy and well enough to use pleasantry to-day. For Heaven's sake, do not neglect to profit by this advantage, however, under a mistaken opinion that Blonay is the well-sheltered Pisa. When the winter shall arrive, thou wilt see that these mountains are still the icy Alps, and the winds will whistle through this crazy castle, as they are wont to sing through the naked corridors of Willading."

"We have time before us, and can think of this. Thou wilt proceed to Milan, no doubt, as soon as the revels of Vévey are ended."

"The soldier has little choice but duty. My long and frequent leaves of absence of late,—leaves that have been liberally granted to me on account of important family concerns,—impose an additional obligation to be punctual, that I may not seem forgetful of favors already enjoyed. Although we all owe a heavy debt to nature, our voluntary engagements have ever seemed to me the most serious."

Adelheid listened with breathless attention. Never before had he uttered the word family, in reference to himself, in her presence. The allusion appeared to have created unpleasant recollections in the mind of the young man himself, for when he ceased to speak his countenance fell, and he even appeared to be fast forgetting the presence of his fair companion. The latter turned sensitively from a subject which she saw gave him pain, and endeavored to call his thoughts to other things. By an unforeseen fatality, the very expedient adopted hastened the explanation she would now have given so much to postpone.

"My father has often extolled the site of the Baron de Blonay's castle," said Adelheid, gazing from the window, though all the fair objects of the view floated unheeded before her eyes; "but, until now, I have always suspected that friendly feeling had a great influence on his descriptions."

"You did him injustice then," answered Sigismund, advancing to the opening: "of all the ancient holds of Switzerland, Blonay is perhaps entitled to the palm, for possessing the fairest site. Regard yon treacherous lake, Adelheid! Can we fancy that sleeping mirror the same boiling caldron on which we were so lately tossed, helpless and nearly hopeless?"

"Hopeless, Sigismund, but for thee!"

"Thou forget'st the daring Italian, without whose coolness and skill we must indeed have irredeemably perished."

"And what would it be to me if the worthless bark were saved, while my father and his friend were abandoned to the frightful fate that befell the patron and that unhappy peasant of Berne!"

The pulses of the young man beat high, for there was a tenderness in the tones of Adelheid to which he was unaccustomed, and which, indeed, he had never before discovered in her voice.

"I will go seek this brave mariner," he said, trembling lest his self-command should be again lost by the seductions of such a communion:—"It is time he had more substantial proofs of our gratitude."

"No, Sigismund," returned the maiden firmly, and in a way to chain him to the spot, "thou must not quit me yet. I have much to say—much that touches my future happiness, and, I am perhaps weak enough to believe, thine."

Sigismund was bewildered, for the manner of his companion, though the color went and came in sudden and bright flashes across her pure brows, was miraculously calm and full of dignity. He took the seat to which she silently pointed, and sat motionless as if carved in stone, his faculties absorbed in the single sense of hearing. Adelheid saw that the crisis was arrived, and that retreat, without an appearance of levity that her character and pride equally forbade, was impossible. The inbred and perhaps the inherent feelings of her sex would now have caused her again to avoid the explanation, at least as coming from herself, but that she was sustained by a high and holy motive.

"Thou must find great delight, Sigismund, in reflecting on thine own good acts to others. But for thee Melchior de Willading would have long since been childless;

and but for thee his daughter would now be an orphan. The knowledge that thou hast had the power and the will to succor thy friends must be worth all other knowledge!"

"As connected with thee, Adelheid, it is," he answered in a low voice; "I would not exchange the secret happiness of having been of this use to thee, and to those thou lovest, for the throne of the powerful prince I serve. I have had my secret wrested from me already, and it is vain attempting to deny it, if I would. Thou knowest I love thee; and, in spite of myself, my heart cherishes the weakness. I rather rejoice, than dread, to say, that it will cherish it until it cease to feel. This is more than I ever intended to repeat to thy modest ears, which ought not to be wounded by idle declarations like these, but—thou smilest—Adelheid!—can thy gentle spirit mock at a hopeless passion?"

"Why should my smile mean mockery?"

"Adelheid!—nay—this can never be. One of my birth—my ignoble, nameless origin, cannot even intimate his wishes, with honor, to a lady of thy name and expectations!"

"Sigismund, it *can* be. Thou hast not well calculated either the heart of Adelheid de Willading, or the gratitude of her father."

The young man gazed earnestly at the face of the maiden, which, now that she had disburdened her soul of its most secret thought, reddened to the temples, more however with excitement than with shame, for she met his ardent look with the mild confidence of innocence and affection. She believed, and she had every reason so to believe, that her words would give pleasure, and, with the jealous watchfulness of true love, she would not willingly let a single expression of happiness escape her. But, instead of the brightening eye and the sudden expression of joy that she expected, the young man appeared overwhelmed with feelings of a very opposite, and indeed of the most painful, character. His breathing was difficult, his look wandered, and his lips were convulsed. He passed his hand across his brow, like a man in intense agony, and a cold perspiration broke out, as by a dreadful inward working of the spirit, upon his forehead and temples, in large visible drops.

"Adelheid—dearest Adelheid—thou knowest not what thou sayest! One like me can never become thy husband."

"Sigismund!—why this distress? Speak to me—ease thy mind by words. I swear to thee that the consent of my father is accompanied on my part by a willing heart. I love thee, Sigismund—wouldst thou have me—can I say more?"

The young man gazed at her incredulously, and then, as thought became more clear, as one regards a much-prized object that is hopelessly lost. He shook his head mournfully, and buried his face in his hands.

"Say no more, Adelheid—for my sake—for thine own sake, say no more—in mercy, be silent! Thou never canst be mine! No, no—honor forbids it; in thee it would be madness, in me dishonor—we can never be united. What fatal weakness has kept me near thee—I have long dreaded this——"

"Dreaded!"

"Nay, do not repeat my words,—for I scarce know what I say. Thou and thy father have yielded, in a moment of vivid gratitude, to a generous, a noble impulse—but it is not for me to profit by the accident that has enabled me to gain this advantage. What would all of thy blood, all of the republic say, Adelheid, were the noblest born, the best endowed, the fairest, the gentlest, best maiden of the canton, to wed a nameless, houseless, soldier of fortune, who has but his sword and some gifts of nature to recommend him? Thy excellent father will surely think better of this, and we will speak of it no more!"

"Were I to listen to the common feelings of my sex, Sigismund, this reluctance to accept what both my father and myself offer might cause me to feign displeasure. But, between thee and me, there shall be naught but holy truth. My father has well weighed all these objections, and he has generously decided to forget them. As for me, placed in the scale against thy merits, they have never weighed at all. If thou canst not become noble in order that we may be equals, I shall find more happiness in descending to thy level, than by living in heartless misery at the vain height where I have been placed by accident."

"Blessed, ingenuous girl! But what does it all avail? Our marriage is impossible."

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"If thou knowest of any obstacle that would render it improper for a weak, but virtuous girl——"

"Hold, Adelheid!—do not finish the sentence. I am sufficiently humbled—sufficiently debased—without this cruel suspicion."

"Then why is our union impossible—when my father not only consents, but wishes it may take place?"

"Give me time for thought—thou shalt know all, Adelheid, sooner or later. Yes, this is, at the least, due to thy noble frankness. Thou shouldst in justice have known it long before."

Adelheid regarded him in speechless apprehension, for the evident and violent physical struggles of the young man too fearfully announced the mental agony he endured. The color had fled from her own face, in which the beauty of expression now reigned undisputed mistress; but it was the expression of the mingled sentiments of wonder, dread, tenderness, and alarm. He saw that his own sufferings were fast communicating themselves to his companion, and, by a powerful effort, he so far mastered his emotions as to regain a portion of his self-command.

"This explanation has been too heedlessly delayed," he continued; "cost what it may, it shall be no longer postponed. Thou wilt not accuse me of cruelty, or of dishonest silence, but remember the failing of human nature, and pity rather than blame a weakness which may be the cause of as much future sorrow to thyself, beloved Adelheid, as it is now of bitter regret to me. I have never concealed from thee that my birth is derived from that class which throughout Europe is believed to be of inferior rights to thine own; on this head, I am proud rather than humble, for the invidious distinctions of usage have too often provoked comparisons, and I have been in situations to know that the mere accidents of descent bestow neither personal excellence, superior courage, nor higher intellect. Though human inventions may serve to depress the less fortunate, God has given fixed limits to the means of men. He that would be greater than his kind, and illustrious by unnatural expedients, must debase others to attain this end. By different means than these there is no nobility, and he who is unwilling to admit an inferiority which exists only in idea can never be humbled by an artifice so shallow. On the subject of mere birth, as it is ordinarily estimated, whether it come from pride, or philosophy, or the habit of commanding as a soldier those who might be deemed by superiors as men, I have never been very sensitive. Perhaps the heavier disgrace which crushes me may have caused this want to appear lighter than it otherwise might."

"Disgrace!" repeated Adelheid, in a voice that was nearly choked. "The word is fearful, coming from one of thy regulated mind, and as applied to himself."

"I cannot choose another. Disgrace it is by the common consent of men—by long and enduring opinion—it would almost seem by the just judgment of God. Dost thou not believe, Adelheid, that there are certain races which are deemed accursed, to answer some great and unseen end—races on whom the holy blessings of Heaven never descend, as they visit the meek and well-deserving that come of other lines?"

"How can I believe this gross injustice, on the part of a Power that is wise without bounds, and forgiving to parental love?"

"Thy answer would be well were this earth the universe, or this state of being the last. But He whose sight extends beyond the grave, who fashions justice, and mercy, and goodness, on a scale commensurate with his own attributes, and not according to our limited means, is not to be estimated by the narrow rules that we apply to men. No, we must not measure the ordinances of God by laws that are plausible in our own eyes. Justice is a relative and not an abstract quality; and, until we understand the relations of the Deity to ourselves as well as we understand our own relations to the Deity, we reason in the dark."

"I do not like to hear thee speak thus, Sigismund, and, least of all, with a brow so clouded, and in a voice so hollow!"

"I will tell my tale more cheerfully, dearest. I have no right to make thee partner of my misery; and yet this is the manner I have reasoned, and thought, and pondered—aye, until my brain has grown heated, and the power to reason itself has nearly tottered.

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Ever since that accursed hour, in which the truth became known to me, and I was made the master of the fatal secret, have I endeavored to feel and reason thus."

"What truth?—what secret? If thou lovest me, Sigismund, speak calmly and without reserve."

The young man gazed at her anxious face in a way to show how deeply he felt the weight of the blow he was about to give. Then, after a pause, he continued.

"We have lately passed through a terrible scene together, dearest Adelheid. It was one that may well lessen the distances set between us by human laws and the tyranny of opinions. Had it been the will of God that the bark should perish, what a confused crowd of ill-assorted spirits would have passed together into eternity! We had them there of all degrees of vice, as of nearly all degrees of cultivation, from the subtle iniquity of the wily Neapolitan juggler to thine own pure soul. There would have died in the Winkelried the noble of high degree, the reverend priest, the soldier in the pride of his strength, and the mendicant! Death is an uncompromising leveller, and the depths of the lake, at least, might have washed out all our infamy, whether it came of real demerits or merely from received usage; even the luckless Balthazar, the persecuted and hated headsman, might have found those who would have mourned his loss."

"If any could have died unwept in meeting such a fate, it must have been one that, in common, awakes so little of human sympathy; and one, too, who, by dealing himself in the woes of others, has less claim to the compassion that we yield to most of our species."

"Spare me—in mercy, Adelheid, spare me—thou speakest of my father!"

CHAPTER XI.

"Fortune had smiled upon Guelberto's birth,
The heir of Valdespesa's rich domain;
An only child, he grew in years and worth,
And well repaid a father's anxious pain."

—SOUTHEY.

As Sigismund uttered this communication, so terrible to the ear of the listener, he arose and fled from the room. The possession of a kingdom would not have tempted him to remain and note its effect. The domestics of Blonay observed his troubled air and rapid strides as he passed them, but too simple to suspect more than the ordinary impetuosity of youth, he succeeded in getting through the inferior gate of the castle and into the fields, without attracting any embarrassing attention to his movements. Here he began to breathe more freely, and the load which had nearly choked his respiration became lightened. For half an hour the young man paced the greensward, scarcely conscious whither he went, until he found that his steps had again led him beneath the window of the knights' hall. Glancing an eye upward, he saw Adelheid still seated at the balcony, and apparently yet alone. He thought she had been weeping, and he cursed the weakness which had kept him from effecting the often-renewed resolution to remove himself and his cruel fortunes forever from before her mind. A second look, however, showed him that he was again beckoned to ascend! The revolutions in the purposes of lovers are sudden and easily effected; and Sigismund, through whose mind a dozen ill-digested plans of placing the sea between himself and her he loved had just been floating, was now hurriedly retracing his steps to her presence.

Adelheid had necessarily been educated under the influence of the prejudices of the age and of the country in which she lived. The existence of the office of headsman in Berne, and the nature of its hereditary duties, were well known to her; and, though superior to the inimical feeling which had so lately been exhibited against the luckless Balthazar, she had certainly never anticipated a shock so cruel as was now produced, by abruptly learning that this despised and persecuted being was the father of the youth to whom she had yielded her virgin affections. When the words which proclaimed the connection had escaped the lips of Sigismund, she listened like one who fancied that her ears deceived her. She had prepared herself to learn that he derived his being from some peasant or ignoble artisan, and, once or twice, as he drew nearer to the fatal declaration, awkward glimmerings of a suspicion that some repulsive moral unworthiness was connected with his origin troubled her imagina-

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tion; but her apprehensions could not, by possibility, once turn in the direction of the revolting truth. It was some time before she was able to collect her thoughts, or to reflect on the course it most become her to pursue. But, as has been seen, it was not long before she could summon the self-command to request what she now saw was doubly necessary, another meeting with her lover. As both had thought of nothing but his last words during the short separation, there appeared no abruptness in the manner in which he resumed the discourse, on seating himself at her side, exactly as if they had not parted at all.

"The secret has been torn from me, Adelheid. The headsman of the canton is my father; were the fact publicly known, the heartless and obdurate laws would compel me to be his successor. He has no other child, except a gentle girl—one innocent and kind as thou."

Adelheid covered her face with both her hands, as if to shut out a view of the horrible truth. Perhaps an instinctive reluctance to permit her companion to discover how great a blow had been given by this avowal of his birth, had also its influence in producing the movement. They who have passed the period of youth, and who can recall those days of inexperience and hope, when the affections are fresh and the heart is untainted with too much communion with the world,—and, especially, they who know of what a delicate compound of the imaginative and the real the master-passion is formed, how sensitively it regards all that can reflect credit on the beloved object, and with what ingenuity it endeavors to find plausible excuses for every blot that may happen, either by accident or demerit, to tarnish the lustre of a picture that fancy has so largely aided in drawing, will understand the rude nature of the shock that she had received. But Adelheid de Willading, though a woman in the liveliness and fervor of her imagination, as well as in the proneness to conceive her own ingenuous conceptions to be more founded in reality than a sterner view of things might possibly have warranted, was a woman, also, in the more generous qualities of the heart, and in those enduring principles, which seem to have predisposed the better part of the sex to make the heaviest sacrifices rather than be false to their affections. While her frame shuddered, therefore, with the violence and abruptness of the emotions she had endured, dawnings of the right gleamed upon her pure mind, and it was not long before she was able to contemplate the truth with the steadiness of principle, though it might, at the same time, have been with much of the lingering weakness of humanity. When she lowered her hands, she looked toward the mute and watchful Sigismund with a smile that caused the deadly paleness of her features to resemble a gleam of the sun lighting upon a spotless peak of her native mountains.

"It would be vain to endeavor to conceal from thee, Sigismund," she said, "that I could wish this were not so. I will confess even more—that when the truth first broke upon me, thy repeated services, and, what is even less pardonable, thy tried worth, were for an instant forgotten in the reluctance I felt to admit that my fate could ever be united with one so unhappily situated. There are moments when prejudices and habits are stronger than reason; but their triumph is short in well-intentioned minds. The terrible injustice of our laws has never struck me with such force before, though last night, while those wretched travellers were so eager for the blood of—of——"

"My father, Adelheid."

"Of the author of thy being, Sigismund," she continued, with a solemnity that proved to the young man how deeply she reverenced the tie— "I was compelled to see that society might be cruelly unjust; but now I find its laws and prohibitions visiting one like thee, so far from joining in its oppression, my soul revolts against the wrong."

"Thanks—thanks—a thousand thanks!" returned the young man, fervently. "I did not expect less than this from thee, Mademoiselle de Willading."

"If thou didst not expect more—far more, Sigismund," resumed the maiden, her ashen hue brightened to crimson, "thou hast scarcely been less unjust than the world; and I will add, thou hast never understood that Adelheid de Willading, whose name is uttered with so cold a form. We all have moments of weakness; moments when the seductions of life, the worthless ties which

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bind together the thoughtless and selfish in what are called the interests of the world, appear of more value than aught else. I am no visionary, to fancy imaginary and factitious obligations superior to those which nature and wisdom have created—for if there be much unjustifiable cruelty in the practices, there is also much that is wise in the ordinances, of society—or to think that a wayward fancy is to be indulged at any and every expense to the feelings and opinions of others. On the contrary, I well know that so long as men exist in the condition in which they are, it is little more than common prudence to respect their habits; and that ill-assorted unions, in general, contain in themselves a dangerous enemy to happiness. Had I always known thy history, dread of the consequences, or those cold forms which protect the fortunate, would probably have interposed to prevent either from learning much of the other's character. I say not this, Sigismund, as by thy eye I see thou wouldst think, in reproach for any deception, for I well know the accidental nature of our acquaintance, and that the intimacy was forced upon thee by our own importunate gratitude, but simply, and in explanation of my own feelings. As it is, we are not to judge of our situation by ordinary rules, and I am not now to decide on your pretensions to my hand merely as the daughter of the Baron de Willading receiving a proposal from one whose birth is not noble, but as Adelheid should weigh the claims of Sigismund, subject to some diminution of advantages, if thou wilt, that is perhaps greater than she had at first anticipated."

"Dost thou consider the acceptance of my hand possible, after what thou knowest?" exclaimed the young man, in open wonder.

"So far from regarding the question in that manner, I ask myself if it will be right—if it be possible, to reject the preserver of my own life, the preserver of my father's life, Sigismund Steinbach, because he is the son of one that men persecute?"

"Adelheid!"

"Do not anticipate my words," said the maiden calmly, but in a way to check his impatience by the quiet dignity of her manner. "This is an important, I might say a solemn decision, and it has been presented to me suddenly and without preparation. Thou wilt not think the worse of me, for asking time to reflect before I give the pledge that in my eyes will be forever sacred. My father, believing thee to be of obscure origin, and thoroughly conscious of thy worth, dear Sigismund, authorized me to speak as I did in the beginning of our interview; but my father may possibly think the conditions of his consent altered by this unhappy exposure of the truth. It is meet that I tell him all, for thou knowest I must abide by his decision. This thine own sense and filial piety will approve."

In spite of the strong objectionable facts that he had just revealed, hope had begun to steal upon the wishes of the young man, as he listened to the consoling words of the single-minded and affectionate Adelheid. It would scarcely have been possible for a youth so endowed by nature, and one so inevitably conscious of his own value, though so modest in its exhibition, not to feel encouraged by her ingenuous and frank admission, as she betrayed his influence over her happiness in the undisguised and simple manner related. But the intention to appeal to her father caused him to view the subject more dispassionately, for his strong sense was not slow in pointing out the difference between the two judges, in a case like his.

"Trouble him not, Adelheid; the consciousness that his prudence denies what a generous feeling might prompt him to bestow, may render him unhappy. It is impossible that Melchior de Willading should consent to give an only child to a son of the headsman of his canton. At some other time when the recollections of the late storm shall be less vivid, thine own reason will approve of his decision."

His companion, who was thoughtfully leaning her spotless brow on her hand, did not appear to hear his words. She had recovered from the shock given by the sudden announcement of his origin, and was now musing intently, and with cooler discrimination, on the commencement of their acquaintance, its progress and all its little incidents, down to the grave events which had so gradually and firmly cemented the sentiments of esteem and admiration in the stronger and indelible tie of affection.

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"If thou art the son of him thou namest, why art thou known by the name of Steinbach, when Balthazar bears another?" demanded Adelheid, anxious to seize even the faintest hold of hope.

"It was my intention to conceal nothing, but to lay before thee the history of my life, with all the reasons that may have influenced my conduct," returned Sigismund; "at some other time, when both are in a calmer state of mind, I shall dare to entreat a hearing——"

"Delay is unnecessary—it might even be improper. It is my duty to explain everything to my father, and he may wish to know why thou hast not always appeared what thou art. Do not fancy, Sigismund, that I distrust thy motive, but the wariness of the old and the confidence of the young have so little in common!—I would rather that thou told me now."

He yielded to the mild earnestness of her manner, and to the sweet but sad smile with which she seconded the appeal.

"If thou wilt hear the melancholy history, Adelheid," he said, "there is no sufficient reason why I should wish to postpone the little it will be necessary to say. You are probably familiar with the laws of the canton, I mean those cruel ordinances by which a particular family is condemned, for a better word can scarcely be found, to discharge the duties of this revolting office. This duty may have been a privilege in the dark ages, but it is now become a tax that none, who have been educated with better hopes, can endure to pay. My father, trained from infancy to expect the employment, and accustomed to its discharge in contemplation, succeeded to his parent while yet young, and, though formed by nature a meek and even a compassionate man, he has never shrunk from his bloody tasks, whenever required to fulfil them by the command of his superiors. But, touched by a sentiment of humanity, it was his wish to avert from me what his better reason led him to think the calamity of our race. I am the eldest born, and, strictly, I was the child most liable to be called to assume the office, but, as I have heard, the tender love of my mother induced her to suggest a plan by which I, at least, might be rescued from the odium that had so long been attached to our name. I was secretly conveyed from the house while yet an infant; a feigned death concealed the pious fraud, and thus far, Heaven be praised! the authorities are ignorant of my birth!"

"And thy mother, Sigismund; I have great respect for that noble mother, who, doubtless, is endowed with more than her sex's firmness and constancy, since she must have sworn faith and love to thy father, knowing his duties and the hopelessness of their being evaded? I feel a reverence for a woman so superior to the weaknesses, and yet so true to the real and best affections, of her sex!"

The young man smiled so painfully as to cause his enthusiastic companion to regret that she had put the question.

"My mother is certainly a woman not only to be loved, but in many particulars deeply to be revered. My poor and noble mother has a thousand excellences, being a most tender parent, with a heart so kind that it would grieve her to see injury done even to the meanest living thing. She was not a woman, surely, intended by God to be the mother of a line of executioners!"

"Thou seest, Sigismund," said Adelheid, nearly breathless in the desire to seek an excuse for her own predilections, and to lessen the mental agony he endured—"thou seest that one gentle and excellent woman, at least, could trust her happiness to thy family. No doubt she was the daughter of some worthy and just-viewing burgher of the canton, that had educated his child to distinguish between misfortune and crime?"

"She was an only child and an heiress, like thyself, Adelheid," he answered, looking about him as if he sought some object on which he might cast part of the bitterness that loaded his heart. "Thou art not less the beloved and cherished of thine own parent than was my excellent mother of hers!"

"Sigismund, thy manner is startling! What wouldst thou say?"

"Neufchâtel, and other countries besides Berne, have their privileged! My mother was the only child of the headsman of the first. Thus thou seest, Adelheid, that I boast my quarterings as well as another. God be praised! we are not legally compelled, however, to butcher the condemned of any country but our own!"

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The wild bitterness with which this was uttered, and the energy of his language, struck thrilling chords on every nerve of his listener.

"So many honors should not be unsupported," he resumed. "We are rich, for people of humble wishes, and have ample means of living without the revenues of our charge—I love to put forth our long-acquired honors! The means of a respectable livelihood are far from being wanted. I have told you of the kind intentions of my mother to redeem one of her children, at least, from the stigma which weighed upon us all, and the birth of a second son enabled her to effect this charitable purpose, without attracting attention. I was nursed and educated apart, for many years, in ignorance of my birth. At a suitable age, notwithstanding the early death of my brother, I was sent to seek advancement in the service of the house of Austria, under the feigned name I bear. I will not tell thee the anguish I felt, Adelheid, when the truth was at length revealed! Of all the cruelties inflicted by society, there is none so unrighteous in its nature as the stigma it entails in the succession of crime or misfortune; of all its favors, none can find so little justification, in right and reason, as the privileges accorded to the accident of descent."

"And yet we are much accustomed to honor those that come of an ancient line, and to see some part of the glory of the ancestor even in the most remote descendant."

"The more remote, the greater is the world's deference. What better proof can we have of the world's weakness? Thus the immediate child of the hero, he whose blood is certain, who bears the image of the father in his face, who has listened to his counsels, and may be supposed to have derived at least some portion of his greatness from the nearness of his origin, is less a prince than he who has imbibed the current through a hundred vulgar streams, and, were truth but known, may have no natural claim at all upon the much prized blood! This comes of artfully leading the mind to prejudices, and of a vicious longing in man to forget his origin and destiny, by wishing to be more than nature ever intended he should become."

"Surely, Sigismund, there is something justifiable in the sentiment of desiring to belong to the good and noble!"

"If good and noble were the same. Thou hast well designated the feeling; so long as it is truly a sentiment, it is not only excusable but wise; for who would not wish to come of the brave, and honest, and learned, or by what other greatness they may be known?—it is wise, since the legacy of his virtues is perhaps the dearest incentive that a good man has for struggling against the currents of baser interest; but what hope is left to one like me, who finds himself so placed that he can neither inherit nor transmit aught but disgrace! I do not affect to despise the advantages of birth, simply because I do not possess them; I only complain that artful combinations have perverted what should be sentiment and taste, into a narrow and vulgar prejudice, by which the really ignoble enjoy privileges greater than those perhaps who are worthy of the highest honors man can bestow."

Adelheid had encouraged the digression, which, with one less gifted with strong good sense than Sigismund, might have only served to wound his pride, but she perceived that he eased his mind by thus drawing on his reason, and by setting up that which should be in opposition to that which was.

"Thou knowest," she answered, "that neither my father nor I am disposed to lay much stress on the opinions of the world, as it concerns thee."

"That is, neither will insist on nobility; but will either consent to share the obloquy of a union with an hereditary executioner?"

"Thou hast not yet related all it may be necessary to know, that we may decide."

"There is left little to explain. The expedient of my kind parents has thus far succeeded. The two surviving children, my sister and myself, were snatched, for a time at least, from their accursed fortune, while my poor brother, who promised little, was left, by a partiality I will not stop to examine, to pass as the inheritor of our infernal privileges. Nay, pardon, dearest Adelheid, I will be more cool; but death has saved the youth from the execrable duties, and I am now the only male child of Balthazar—yes," he added, laughing frightfully, "I too have

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now a narrow monopoly of all the honors of our house!"

"Thou—thou, Sigismund—with thy habits, thy education, thy feelings, thou surely canst not be required to discharge the duties of this horrible office!"

"It is easy to see that my high privileges do not charm you, Mademoiselle de Willading; nor can I wonder at the taste. My chief surprise should be, that you so long tolerate an executioner in your presence."

"Did I not know and understand the bitterness of feeling natural to one so placed, this language would cruelly hurt me, Sigismund; but thou canst not truly mean there is a real danger of thy ever being called to execute this duty? Should there be the chance of such a calamity, may not the influence of my father avert it? He is not without weight in the councils of the canton."

"At present his friendship need not be taxed, for none but my parents, my sister, and thou, Adelheid, are acquainted with the facts I have just related. My poor sister is an artless, but unhappy girl, for the well-intentioned design of our mother has greatly disqualified her from bearing the truth as she might have done, had it been kept constantly before her eyes. To the world, a young kinsman of my father appears destined to succeed him, and there the matter must stand until fortune shall decide differently. As respects my poor sister, there is some little hope that the evil may be altogether averted. She is on the point of a marriage here at Vévey, that may be the means of concealing her origin in new ties. As for me, time must decide my fate."

"Why should the truth be ever known!" exclaimed Adelheid, nearly gasping for breath, in her eagerness to propose some expedient that should rescue Sigismund forever from so odious an office. "Thou sayest that there are ample means in thy family—relinquish all to this youth, on condition that he assume thy place!"

"I would gladly beggar myself to be quit of it——"

"Nay, thou wilt not be a beggar while there is wealth among the De Willadings. Let the final decision, in respect to other things, be what it may, this we can at least promise!"

"My sword will prevent me from being under the necessity of accepting the boon thou wouldst offer. With this good sword I can always command an honorable existence, should Providence save me from the disgrace of exchanging it for that of the executioner. But there exists an obstacle of which thou hast not yet heard. My sister, who has certainly no admiration for the honors that have humiliated our race for so many generations—I might say ages—have we not ancient honors, Adelheid, as well as thou?—my sister is contracted to one who bargains for eternal secrecy on this point, as the condition of his accepting the hand and ample dowry of one of the gentlest of human beings! Thou seest that others are not as generous as thyself, Adelheid! My father, anxious to dispose of his child, has consented to the terms, and as the youth who is next in succession to the family honors is little disposed to accept them, and has already some suspicion of the deception, as respects her, I may be compelled to appear in order to protect the offspring of my unoffending sister from the curse."

This was assailing Adelheid in a point where she was the weakest. One of her generous temperament and self-denying habits could scarce entertain the wish of exacting that from another which she was not willing to undergo herself, and the hope that had just been reviving in her heart was nearly extinguished by the discovery. Still she was so much in the habit of feeling under the guidance of her excellent sense, and it was so natural to cling to her just wishes, while there was a reasonable chance of their being accomplished, that she did not despair.

"Thy sister and her future husband know her birth, and understand the chances they run."

"She knows all this, and such is her generosity, that she is not disposed to betray me in order to serve herself. But this self-denial forms an additional obligation on my part to declare myself the wretch I am. I cannot say that my sister is accustomed to regard our long-endured fortunes with all the horror I feel, for she has been longer acquainted with the facts, and the domestic habits of her sex have left her less exposed to the encounter of the world's hatred, and perhaps she is partly

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ignorant of all the odium we sustain. My long absences in foreign services delayed the confidence as respects myself, while the yearnings of a mother toward an only daughter caused her to be received into the family, though still in secret, several years before I was told the truth. She is also much my junior; and all these causes, with some difference in our education, have less disposed her to misery than I am; for while my father, with a cruel kindness, had me well and even liberally instructed, Christine was taught as better became the hopes and origin of both. Now tell me, Adelheid, that thou hatest me for my parentage, and despisest me for having so long dared to intrude on thy company, with the full consciousness of what I am forever present to my thoughts!"

"I like not to hear thee make these bitter allusions to an accident of this nature, Sigismund. Were I to tell thee that I do not feel this circumstance with nearly, if not quite, as much poignancy as thyself," added the ingenuous girl, with a noble frankness, "I should do injustice to my gratitude and to my esteem for thy character. But there is more elasticity in the heart of woman than in that of thy imperious and proud sex. So far from thinking of thee as thou wouldst fain believe, I see naught but what is natural and justifiable in thy reserve. Remember, thou hast not tempted my ears by professions and prayers, as women are commonly entreated, but that the interest I feel in thee has been modestly and fairly won. I can neither say nor hear more at present, for this unexpected announcement has in some degree unsettled my mind. Leave me to reflect on what I ought to do, and rest assured that thou canst not have a kinder or more partial advocate of what truly belongs to thy honor and happiness than my own heart."

As the daughter of Melchior de Willading concluded, she extended her hand with affection to the young man, who pressed it against his breast with manly tenderness, when he slowly and reluctantly withdrew.

CHAPTER XII.

"To know no more
Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise."
—MILTON.

OUR heroine was a woman in the best meaning of that endearing, and, we might add, comprehensive word. Sensitive, reserved, and at times even timid, on points that did not call for the exercise of higher qualities, she was firm in her principles, constant as she was fond in her affections, and self-devoted when duty and inclination united to induce the concession, to a degree that placed the idea of sacrifice out of the question. On the other hand, the liability to receive lively impressions, a distinctive feature of her sex, and the aptitude to attach importance to the usages by which she was surrounded, and which is necessarily greatest in those who lead secluded and inactive lives, rendered it additionally difficult for her mind to escape from the trammels of opinion, and to think with indifference of circumstances which all near her treated with high respect, or to which they attached a stigma allied to disgust. Had the case been reversed, had Sigismund been noble, and Adelheid a headsman's child, it is probable the young man might have found the means to indulge his passion without making too great a sacrifice of his pride. By transporting his wife to his castle, conferring his own established name, separating her from all that was unpleasant and degrading in the connection, and finding occupation for his own mind in the multiplying and engrossing employments of his station, he would have diminished motives for contemplating, and consequently for lamenting, the objectionable features of the alliance he had made. These are the advantages which nature and the laws of society give to man over the weaker but the truer sex: and yet how few would have had sufficient generosity to make even the sacrifice of feeling which such a course required! On the other hand, Adelheid would be compelled to part with the ancient and distinguished appellation of her family, to adopt one which was deemed infamous in the canton, or, if some politic expedient were found to avert this first disgrace, it would unavoidably be of a nature

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to attract, rather than to avert, the attention of all who knew the facts, to the humiliating character of his origin. She had no habitual relief against the constant action of her thoughts, for the sphere of woman narrows the affections in such a way as to render them most dependent on the little accidents of domestic life; she could not close her doors against communication with the kinsmen of her husband, should it be his pleasure to command or his feeling to desire it; and it would become obligatory on her to listen to the still but never-ceasing voice of duty, and to forget, at his request, that she had ever been more fortunate, or that she was born for better hopes.

We do not say that all these calculations crossed the mind of the musing maiden, though she certainly had a general and vague view of the consequences that were likely to be drawn upon herself by a connection with Sigismund. She sat motionless, buried in deep thought, long after his disappearance. The young man had passed by the postern around the base of the castle, and was descending the mountain-side across the sloping meadows with rapid steps, and probably for the first time since their acquaintance her eye followed his manly figure vacantly and with indifference.

Her mind was too intently occupied for the usual observation of the senses. The whole of that grand and lovely landscape was spread before her without conveying impressions, as we gaze into the void of the firmament with our looks on vacuum. Sigismund had disappeared among the walls of the vineyards, when she arose, and drew such a sigh as is apt to escape us after long and painful meditation. But the eyes of the high-minded girl were bright and her cheeks flushed, while the whole of her features wore an expression of loftier beauty than ordinarily distinguished even her loveliness. Her own resolution was formed. She had decided, with the rare and generous self-devotion of a female heart that loves, and which can love in its freshness and purity but once. At that instant footsteps were heard in the corridor, and the three old nobles whom we so lately left on the castle terrace appeared together in the knights' hall.

Melchior de Willading approached his daughter with a joyous face, for he, too, had lately gained what he conceived to be a glorious conquest over his prejudices, and the victory put him in excellent humor with himself.

"The question is forever decided," he said, kissing the burning forehead of Adelheid with affection, and rubbing his hands in the manner of one who was glad to be free from a perplexing doubt. "These good friends agree with me, that in a case like this, it becomes even our birth to forget the origin of the youth. He who has saved the lives of the two last Willadings at least deserves to have some share in what is left of them. Here is my good Grimaldi, too, ready to beard me if I will not consent to let him enrich the brave fellow—as if we were beggars, and had not the means of supporting our kinsman in credit at home. But we will not be indebted even to so tried a friend for a tittle of our happiness. The work shall be all our own, even to the letters of nobility, which I shall command at an early day from Vienna; for it would be cruel to let the noble fellow want so simple an advantage, which will at once raise him to our own level, and make him as good—aye, by the beard of Luther! better than the best man in Berne."

"I have never known thee niggardly before, though I have known thee often well intrenched behind Swiss frugality," said the Signor Grimaldi, laughing. "Thy life, my dear Melchior, may have excellent value in thine own eyes, but I am little disposed to set so mean a price on my own as thou appearest to think it should command. Thou hast decided well, I will say nobly, in the best meaning of the word, in consenting to receive this brave Sigismund as a son; but thou art not to think, young lady, because this body of mine is getting the worse for use, that I hold it altogether worthless, and that it is to be dragged from yonder lake like so much foul linen, and no questions are to be asked touching the manner in which the service has been done. I claim to portion thy husband, that he may at least make an appearance that becomes the son-in-law of Melchior de Willading. Am I of no value, that ye treat me so unceremoniously as to say I shall not pay for my own preservation?"

"Have it thine own way, good Gaetano—

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have it as thou wilt, so thou dost but leave us the youth——"

"Father——"

"I will have no maidenly affectation, Adelheid. I expect thee to receive the husband we offer with as good a grace as if he wore a crown. It has been agreed upon between us that Sigismund Steinbach is to be my son; and from time immemorial the daughters of our house have submitted, in these affairs, to what has been advised by the wisdom of their seniors, as became their sex and inexperience."

The three old men had entered the hall full of good humor, and it would have been sufficiently apparent, by the manner of the Baron de Willading, that he trifled with Adelheid, had it not been well known to the others that her feelings were chiefly consulted in the choice that had just been made.

But, notwithstanding the high glee in which the father spoke, the pleasure and buoyancy of his manner did not communicate itself to the child as quickly as he could wish. There was far more than virgin embarrassment in the mien of Adelheid. Her color went and came, and her look turned from one to the other painfully, while she struggled to speak. The Signor Grimaldi whispered to his companions, and Roger de Blonay discreetly withdrew, under the pretence that his services were needed at Vévey, where active preparations were making for the Abbaye des Vignerons. The Genoese would then have followed his example, but the Baron held his arm, while he turned an inquiring eye toward his daughter, as if commanding her to deal more frankly with him.

"Father," said Adelheid, in a voice that shook, in spite of the effort to control her feelings, "I have something important to communicate, before this acceptance of Herr Steinbach is a matter irrevocably determined."

"Speak freely, my child; this is a tried friend, and one entitled to know all that concerns us, especially in this affair. Throwing aside all pleasantry, I trust, Adelheid, that we are to have no girlish trifling with a youth like Sigismund; to whom we owe so much, even to our lives, and in whose behalf we should be ready to sacrifice every feeling of prejudice, or habits—all that we possess, aye, even to our pride."

"All, father?"

"I have said all. I will not take back a letter of the word, though it should rob me of Willading, my rank in the canton, and an ancient name to boot. Am I not right, Gaetano? I place the happiness of the boy above all other considerations, that of Adelheid being understood to be so intimately blended with his. I repeat it, therefore, all."

"It would be well to hear what the young lady has to say, before we urge this affair any further," said the Signor Grimaldi, who, having achieved no conquest over himself, was not quite so exuberant in his exultation as his friend; observing more calmly, and noting what he saw with the clearness of a cooler-headed and more sagacious man. "I am much in error, or thy daughter has that which is serious to communicate."

The paternal affection of Melchior now took the alarm, and he gave an eager attention to his child. Adelheid returned his evident solicitude by a smile of love, but its painful expression was so unequivocal as to heighten the Baron's fears.

"Art not well, love? It cannot be that we have been deceived—that some peasant's daughter is thought worthy to supplant thee? Ha!—Signor Grimaldi, this matter begins, in sooth, to seem offensive;—but, old as I am—Well, we shall never know the truth, unless thou speakest frankly—this is a rare business, after all, Gaetano—that a daughter of mine should be repulsed by a hind!"

Adelheid made an imploring gesture for her father to forbear, while she resumed her seat from further inability to stand. The two anxious old men followed her example, in wondering silence.

"Thou dost both the honor and modesty of Sigismund great injustice, father," resumed the maiden, after a pause, and speaking with a calmness of manner that surprised even herself. "If thou and this excellent and tried friend will give me your attention for a few minutes, nothing shall be concealed."

Her companions listened in wonder, for they plainly saw that the matter was more grave than either had at first imagined. Adelheid paused again, to summon force for the ungrateful duty, and then she succinctly, but clearly, related the substance of Sigis-

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mund's communication. Both the listeners eagerly caught each syllable that fell from the quivering lips of the maiden, for she trembled, notwithstanding a struggle to be calm that was almost superhuman, and when her voice ceased they gazed at each other like men suddenly astounded by some dire and totally unexpected calamity. The Baron, in truth, could scarcely believe that he had not been deceived by a defective hearing, for age had begun a little to impair that useful faculty, while his friend admitted the words as one receives impressions of the most revolting and disheartening nature.

"This is a damnable and fearful fact!" muttered the latter, when Adelheid had altogether ceased to speak.

"Did she say that Sigismund is the son of Balthazar, the public headsman of the canton?" asked the father of his friend, in the way that one reluctantly assures himself of some half-comprehended and unwelcome truth—"of Balthazar—of that family accursed!"

"Such is the parentage it has been the will of God to bestow on the preserver of our lives," meekly answered Adelheid.

"Hath the villain dared to steal into my family circle, concealing this disgusting and disgraceful fact? Hath he endeavored to engraft the impurity of his source on the untarnished stock of a noble and ancient family? There is something exceeding mere duplicity in this, Signor Grimaldi. There is a dark and meaning crime."

"There is that which much exceeds our means of remedying, good Melchior. But let us not rashly blame the boy, whose birth is rather to be imputed to him as a misfortune than as a crime. If he were a thousand Balthazars, he has saved all our lives!"

"Thou sayest true—thou sayest no more than the truth. Thou wert always of a more reasonable brain than I, though thy more southern origin would seem to contradict it. Here, then, are all our fine fancies and liberal schemes of generosity blown to the winds!"

"That is not so evident," returned the Genoese, who had not failed the while to study the countenance of Adelheid, as if he would fully ascertain her secret wishes. "There has been much discourse, fair Adelheid, between thee and the youth on this matter?"

"Signor, there has. I was about to communicate the intentions of my father; for the circumstances in which we were placed, the weight of our many obligations, the usual distance which rank interposes between the noble and the simply born, perhaps justifies this boldness in a maiden," she added, though the tell-tale blood revealed her shame. "I was making Sigismund acquainted with my father's wishes, when he met my confidence by the avowal which I have just related."

"He deems his birth——"

"An insuperable barrier to the connection. Sigismund Steinbach, though so little favored in the accident of his origin, is not a beggar to sue for that which his own generous feelings would condemn."

"And thou?"

Adelheid lowered her eyes, and seemed to reflect on the nature of her answer.

"Thou wilt pardon this curiosity, which may wear too much the aspect of unwarrantable meddling, but my age and ancient friendship, the recent occurrences, and a growing love for all that concerns thee, must plead my excuses. Unless we know thy wishes, daughter, neither Melchior nor I can act as we might wish."

Adelheid was long and thoughtfully silent. Though every sentiment of her heart, and all that inclination which is the offspring of the warm and poetical illusions of love, tempted her to declare a readiness to sacrifice every other consideration to the engrossing and pure affections of woman, opinion with its iron grip still held her in suspense on the propriety of braving the prejudices of the world. The timidity of that sex which, however ready to make an offering of its most cherished privileges on the shrine of connubial tenderness, shrinks with a keen sensitiveness from the appearance of a forward devotion to the other, had its weight also, nor could a child so pious altogether forget the effect her decision might have on the future happiness of her sole surviving parent.

The Genoese understood the struggle, though he foresaw its termination, and he resumed the discourse himself, partly with the kind wish to give the maiden time to

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reflect maturely before she answered, and partly following a very natural train of his own thoughts.

"There is naught sure in this fickle state of being," he continued. "Neither the throne, nor riches, nor health, nor even the sacred affections, are secure against change. Well may we pause then and weigh every chance of happiness, ere we take the last and final step in any great or novel measure. Thou knowest the hopes with which I entered life, Melchior, and the chilling disappointments with which my career is likely to close. No youth was born to fairer hopes, nor did Italy know one more joyous than myself, the morning I received the hand of Angiolina; and yet two short years saw all those hopes withered, this joyousness gone, and a cloud thrown across my prospects which has never disappeared. A widowed husband, a childless father, may not prove a bad counsellor, my friend, in a moment when there is so much doubt besetting thee and thine."

"Thy mind naturally returns to thine own unhappy child, poor Gaetano, when there is so much question of the fortunes of mine."

The Signor Grimaldi turned his look on his friend, but the gleam of anguish, which was wont to pass athwart his countenance when his mind was drawn powerfully toward that painful subject, betrayed that he was not just then able to reply.

"We see in all these events," continued the Genoese, as if too full of his subject to restrain his words, "the unsearchable designs of Providence. Here is a youth that is all that a father could desire; worthy in every sense to be the depository of a beloved and only daughter's weal; manly, brave, virtuous, and noble in all but the chances of blood, and yet so accursed by the world's opinion that we might scarce venture to name him as the associate of an idle hour, were the fact known that he is the man he has declared himself to be!"

"You put the matter in strong language, Signor Grimaldi," said Adelheid, starting.

"A youth of a form so commanding that a king might exult at the prospect of his crown descending on such a head; of a perfection of strength and masculine excellence that will almost justify the dangerous exultation of health and vigor; of a reason that is riper than his years; of a virtue of proof; of all the qualities that we respect, and which come of study and not of accident, and yet a youth condemned of men to live under the reproach of their hatred and contempt, or to conceal forever the name of the mother that bore him! Compare this Sigismund with others that may be named; with the high-born and pampered heir of some illustrious house, who riots in men's respect while he shocks men's morals; who presumes on privilege to trifle with the sacred and the just; who lives for self, and that in base enjoyments; who is fitter to be the lunatic's companion than any other's, though destined to rule in the council; who is the type of the wicked, though called to preside over the virtuous; who cannot be esteemed, though entitled to be honored; and let us ask why this is so, what is the wisdom which hath drawn differences so arbitrary, and which, while proclaiming the necessity of justice, so openly, so wantonly, and so ingeniously sets its plainest dictates at defiance?"

"Signor, it should not be thus—God never intended it should be so!"

"While every principle would seem to say that each must stand or fall by his own good or evil deeds, that men are to be honored as they merit, every device of human institutions is exerted to achieve the opposite. This is exalted, because his ancestry is noble; that condemned for no better reason than that he is born vile. Melchior! Melchior! our reason is unhinged by subtleties, and our boasted philosophy and right are no more than unblushing mockeries, at which the very devils laugh!"

"And yet the commandments of God tell us, Gaetano, that the sins of the father shall be visited on the descendants from generation to generation. You of Rome pay not this close attention, perhaps, to sacred writ, but I have heard it said that we have not in Berne a law for which good warranty cannot be found in the holy volume itself!"

"Aye, there are sophists to prove all that they wish. The crimes and follies of the ancestor leave their physical, or even their moral taint, on the child, beyond a question, good Melchior;—but is not this difficult?

Are we blasphemously, even impiously, to pretend that God has not sufficiently provided for the punishment of the breaches of his wise ordinances, that we must come forward to second them by arbitrary and heartless rules of our own? What crime is imputable to the family of this youth beyond that of poverty, which probably drove the first of his race to the execution of their revolting office. There is little in the mien or morals of Sigismund to denote the visitations of Heaven's wise decrees, but there is everything in his present situation to proclaim the injustice of man."

"And dost thou, Gaetano Grimaldi, the ally of so many ancient and illustrious houses —thou, Gaetano Grimaldi, the honored of Genoa—dost thou counsel me to give my only child, the heiress of my lands and name, to the son of the public executioner, nay, to the very heritor of his disgusting duties!"

"There thou hast me on the hip, Melchior: the question is put strongly, and needs reflection for an answer. Oh! why is this Balthazar so rich in offspring, and I so poor? But we will not press the matter; it is an affair of many sides, and should be judged by us as men, as well as nobles. Daughter, thou hast just learned, by the words of thy father, that I am against thee, by position and heritage, for, while I condemn the principle of this wrong, I cannot overlook its effects, and never before did a case of as tangled difficulty, one in which right was so palpably opposed by opinion, present itself for my judgment. Leave us, that we may command ourselves; the required decision exacts much care, and greater mastery of ourselves than I can exercise with that sweet pale face of thine appealing so eloquently to my heart in behalf of the noble boy."

Adelheid arose, and first offering her marble-like brow to the salutation of both her parents, for the ancient friendship and strong sympathies of the Genoese gave him a claim to this appellation in her affections at least, she silently withdrew. As to the conversation which ensued between the old nobles, we momentarily drop the curtain, to proceed to other incidents of our narrative. It may, however, be generally observed that the day passed quietly away, without the occurrence of any event which it is necessary to relate, all in the château, with the exception of the travellers, being principally occupied by the approaching festivities. The Signor Grimaldi sought an occasion to have a long and a confidential communication with Sigismund, who, on his part, carefully avoided being seen again by her who had so great an influence on his feelings, until both had time to recover their self-command.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Hold, hurt him not, for God's sake;—he is mad."
—*Comedy of Errors.*

THE festivals of Bacchus are supposed to have been the models of those long-continued festivities which are still known in Switzerland by the name of the Abbaye des Vignerons.

This fête was originally of a simple and rustic character being far from possessing the labored ceremonies and classical allegories of a later day, the severity of monkish discipline most probably prohibiting the introduction of allusions to the Heathen mythology, as was afterward practised; for certain religious communities that were the proprietors of large vineyards in that vicinity appear to have been the first known patrons of the custom. So long as a severe simplicity reigned in the festivities, they were annually observed; but when heavier expenses and greater preparations became necessary, longer intervals succeeded; the Abbaye at first causing its festival to become triennial, and subsequently extending the period of vacation to six years. As greater time was obtained for the collection of means and inclination the festival gained in éclat, until it came at length to be a species of jubilee, to which the idle, the curious, and the observant of all the adjacent territories were accustomed to resort in crowds. The town of Vévey profited by the circumstance, the usual motive of interest being enlisted in behalf of the usage, and, down to the epoch of the great European revolution, there would seem to have been an unbroken succession of the fêtes. The occasion to which there has so often been allusion, was one of the regular and long-expected festivals; and

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as report had spoken largely of the preparations, the attendance was even more numerous than usual.

Early on the morning of the second day after the arrival of our travellers at the neighboring castle of Blonay, a body of men, dressed in the guise of halberdiers, a species of troops then known in most of the courts of Europe, marched into the great square of Vévey, taking possession of all its centre, and posting its sentries in such a manner as to interdict the usual passages of the place. This was the preliminary step in the coming festivities; for this was the spot chosen for the scene of most of the ceremonies of the day. The curious were not long behind the guards, and by the time the sun had fairly arisen above the hills of Fribourg, some thousands of spectators were pressing in and about the avenues of the square, and boats from the opposite shores of Savoy were arriving at each instant, crowded to the water's edge with peasants and their families.

Near the upper end of the square, capacious scaffoldings had been erected to contain those who were privileged by rank, or those who were able to buy honors with the vulgar medium; while humbler preparations for the less fortunate completed the three sides of a space that was in the form of a parallelogram, and which was intended to receive the actors in the coming scene. The side next the water was unoccupied, though a forest of latine spars, and a platform of decks, more than supplied the deficiency of scaffolding and room. Music was heard, from time to time, intermingled or relieved by those wild Alpine cries which characterize the songs of the mountaineers. The authorities of the town were early afoot, and as is costumary with the important agents of small concerns, they were exercising their municipal functions with a bustle, which of itself contained reasonable evidence that they were of no great moment, and a gravity of mien with which the chiefs of a state might have believed it possible to dispense.

The estrade, or stage, erected for the superior class of spectators, was decorated with flags, and a portion near its centre had a fair display of tapestry and silken hangings. The chateau-looking edifice near the bottom of the square, and whose windows, according to a common Swiss and German usage, showed the intermingled stripes that denoted it to be public property, were also gay in colors, for the ensign of the Republic floated over its pointed roofs, and rich silks waved against the walls. This was the official residence of Peter Hofmeister, the functionary whom we have already introduced to the reader.

An hour later, a shot gave the signal for the various *troupes* to appear, and soon after, parties of the different actors arrived in the square. As the little processions approached to the sound of the trumpet or horn, curiosity became more active, and the populace was permitted to circulate in those portions of the square that were not immediately required for other purposes. About this time, a solitary individual appeared upon the stage. He seemed to enjoy peculiar privileges, not only from his situation, but by the loud salutations and noisy welcomes with which he was greeted from the crowd below. It was the good monk of St. Bernard, who, with a bare head, and a joyous, contented face, answered to the several calls of the peasants, most of whom had either bestowed hospitality on the worthy Augustine, in his many journeyings among the charitable of the lower world, or had received it at his hands in the frequent passages of the mountain. These recognitions and greetings spoke well for humanity; for in every instance they wore the air of cordial good-will, and a readiness to do honor to the benevolent character of the religious community that was represented in the person of its clavier or steward.

"Good luck to thee, Father Xavier, and a rich *quête*," cried a burly peasant; "thou hast of late unkindly forgotten Benoit Emery and his. When did a clavier of St. Bernard ever knock at my door, and go away with an empty hand? We look for thee, reverend monk, with thy vessel to-morrow; for the summer has been hot, the grapes are rich, and the wine is beginning to run freely in our tubs. Thou shalt dip without any to look at thee, and, take it of which color thou wilt, thou shalt take it with a welcome."

"Thanks, thanks, generous Benoit; St. Augustine will remember thy favor, and thy fruitful vines will be none the poorer for thy generosity. We ask only that we may give,

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and on none do we bestow more willingly than on the honest Vaudois, whom may the saints keep in mind for their kindness and good-will."

"Nay, I will have none of thy saints; thou knowest we are St. Calvin's men in Vaud, if there must be any canonized. But what is it to us that thou hearest mass, while we love the simple worship? Are we not equally men? Does not the frost nip the members of Catholic and Protestant the same? or does the avalanche respect one more than the other? I never knew thee or any of thy convent question the frozen traveller of his faith, but all are fed, and warmed, and at need administered to from the pharmacy with brotherly care, and as Christians merit. Whatever thou mayest think of the state of our souls, thou on thy mountain there, no one will deny thy tender services to our bodies. Say I well, neighbors, or is this only the foolish gossip of old Benoit, who has crossed the Col so often that he has forgotten that our churches have quarrelled, and that the learned will have us go to Heaven by different roads?"

A general movement among the people, and a tossing of hands, appeared in support of the truth and popularity of the honest peasant's sentiments, for in that age the hospice of St. Bernard, more exclusively a refuge for the real and poor traveller than at present, enjoyed a merited reputation in all the country round.

"Thou shalt always be welcome on the pass, thou and thy friends, and all others in the shape of men, without other interference in thy opinions than secret prayers," returned the good-humored and happy-looking clavier, whose round, contented face shone partly in habitual joy, partly in gratification at this public testimonial in favor of the brotherhood, and a little in satisfaction perhaps at the promise of an ample addition to the convent's stores; for the community of St. Bernard, while so much was going out, had a natural and justifiable desire to see some re-return for its incessant and unwearied liberality. "Thou wilt not deny us the happiness of praying for those we love, though it happened to be in a manner different from that in which they ask blessings for themselves."

"Have it thine own way, good canon; I am none of those who are ready to refuse a favor because it savors of Rome. But what has become of our friend Uberto? He rarely comes into the valleys, that we are not anxious to see his glossy coat."

The Augustine gave the customary call, and the mastiff mounted the stage with a grave, deliberate step, as if conscious of the dignity and usefulness of the life he led, and like a dog accustomed to the friendly notice of man. The appearance of this well-known and celebrated brute caused another stir in the throng, many pressing upon the guards to get a nearer view, and a few casting fragments of food from their wallets, as tokens of gratitude and regard. In the midst of this little by-play of good feeling, a dark shaggy animal leaped upon the scaffolding, and very coolly commenced, with an activity that denoted the influence of the keen mountain air on his appetite, picking up the different particles of meat that had, as yet, escaped the eye of Uberto. The intruder was received much in the manner that an unpopular or an offending actor is made to undergo the hostilities of pit and galleries, to revenge some slight or neglect for which he has forgotten or refused to atone. In other words, he was incontinently and mercilessly pelted with such missiles as first presented themselves. The unknown animal, which the reader however will not be slow in recognizing to be the water-dog of Il Maledetto, received these unusual visitations with some surprise, and rather awkwardly; for, in his proper sphere, Nettuno had been quite as much accustomed to meet with demonstrations of friendship from the race he so faithfully served as any of the far-famed and petted mastiffs of the convent. After dodging sundry stones and clubs, as well as a pretty close attention to the principal matter in hand would allow, and with a dexterity that did equal credit to his coolness and muscle, a missile of formidable weight took the unfortunate follower of Maso in the side, and sent him howling from the stage. At the next instant, his master was at the throat of the offender, throttling him till he was black in the face.

The unlucky stone had come from Conrad. Forgetful of his assumed character, he had

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joined in the hue and cry against a dog whose character and service should have been sufficiently known to him, at least, to prove his protection, and had given the cruelest blow of all. It has been already seen that there was little friendship between Maso and the pilgrim, for the former appeared to have an instinctive dislike for the latter's calling, and this little occurrence was not of a character likely to restore the peace between them.

"Thou, too!" cried the Italian, whose blood had mounted at the very first attack on his faithful follower, and which fairly boiled when he witnessed the cowardly and wanton conduct of this new assailant—"art not satisfied with feigning prayers and godliness with the credulous, but thou must even feign enmity to my dog, because it is the fashion to praise the cur of St. Bernard at the expense of all other brutes! Reptile!—dost not dread the arm of an honest man, when raised against thee in just anger?"

"Friends — Vévaisans — honorable citizens!" gasped the pilgrim, as the gripe of Maso permitted breath. "I am Conrad, a poor, miserable, repentant pilgrim. Will ye see me murdered for a brute?"

Such a contest could not continue long in such a place. At first the pressure of the curious, and the great density of the crowd, rather favored the attack of the mariner; but in the end they proved his enemies, by preventing the possibility of escaping from those who were specially charged with the care of the public peace. Luckily for Conrad, for passion had fairly blinded Maso to the consequences of his fury, the halberdiers soon forced their way into the centre of the living mass, and they succeeded in seasonably rescuing him from the deadly gripe of his assailant. Il Maledetto trembled with the reaction of this hot sally, the moment his gripe was forcibly released, and he would have disappeared as soon as possible, had it been the pleasure of those into whose hands he had fallen to permit so politic a step. But now commenced the war of words, and the clamor of voices, which usually succeed, as well as precede, all contests of a popular nature. The officer in charge of this portion of the square questioned; twenty answered in a breath, not only drowning each other's voices, but effectually contradicting all that was said in the way of explanation. One maintained that Conrad had not been content with attacking Maso's dog, but that he had followed up the blow by offering a personal indignity to the master himself; this was the publican in whose house the mariner had taken up his abode, and in which he had been sufficiently liberal in his expenditure fairly to entitle him to the hospitable support of its landlord. Another professed to his readiness to swear that the dog was the property of the pilgrim, being accustomed to carry his wallet, and that Maso, owing to an ancient grudge against both master and beast, had hurled the stone which sent the animal away howling, and had resented a mild remonstrance of its owner in the extraordinary manner that all had seen. This witness was the Neapolitan juggler Pippo, who had much attached himself to the person of Conrad since the adventure of the bark, and who was both ready and willing to affirm anything in behalf of a friend who had so evident need of his testimony, if it were only on the score of boon-companionship. A third declared that the dog belonged truly to the Italian; that the stone had been really hurled by one who stood near the pilgrim, who had been wrongfully accused of the offence by Maso; that the latter had made his attack under a false impression, and richly merited punishment, for the unceremonious manner in which he had stopped Conrad's breath. This witness was perfectly honest, but of a vulgar and credulous mind. He attributed the original offence to one near that happened to have a bad name, and who was very liable to father every sin that, by possibility, could be laid at his door, as well as some that could not. On the other hand, he had also been duped that morning by the pilgrim's superabundant professions of religious zeal, a circumstance that of itself would have prevented him from detecting Conrad's arm in the air as it cast the stone, and which served greatly to increase his certainty that the first offence came from the luckless wight just alluded to; since they who discriminate under general convictions and popular prejudices, usually heap all the odium they pertinaciously withhold from the lucky and favored, on those who seem fated

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by general consent to be the common target of the world's darts.

The officer, by the time he had deliberately heard the three principal witnesses, together with the confounding explanations of those who professed to be only half informed in the matter, was utterly at a loss to decide which had been right and which wrong. He came, therefore, to the safe conclusion to send all the parties to the guard-house, including the witnesses, being quite sure that he had hit on an effectual method of visiting the true criminal with punishment, and of admonishing all those who gave evidence in future to have a care of the manner in which they contradicted each other. Just as this equitable decision was pronounced, the sound of a trumpet proclaimed the approach of a division of the principal mummers, if so irreverent a term can be applied to men engaged in a festival as justly renowned as that of the vine-dressers. This announcement greatly quickened the steps of justice, for they who were charged with the execution of her decrees felt the necessity of being prompt, under the penalty of losing an interesting portion of the spectacle. Actuated by this new impulse, which, if not as respectable, was quite as strong, as the desire to do right, the disturbers of the peace, even to those who had shown a quarrelsome temper by telling stories that gave each other the lie, were hurried away in a body, and the public was left in the enjoyment of that tranquillity which, in these perilous times of revolution and changes, is thought to be so necessary to its dignity, so especially favorable to commerce, and so grateful to those whose duty it is to preserve the public peace with as little inconvenience to themselves as possible.

A blast of the trumpet was the signal for a more general movement, for it announced the commencement of the ceremonies. As it will be presently necessary to speak of the different personages who were represented on this joyous occasion, we shall only say here, that group after group of the actors came into the square, each party marching to the sound of music from its particular point of rendezvous to the common centre. The stage now began to fill with the privileged, among whom were many of the high aristocracy of the ruling canton, most of its officials, who were too dignified to be more than complacent spectators of revels like these, many nobles of mark from France and Italy, a few travellers from England—for in that age England was deemed a distant country and sent forth but a few of her *élite* to represent her on such occasions—most of those from the adjoining territories who could afford the time and cost, and who by rank or character were entitled to the distinction, and the wives and families of the local officers who happened to be engaged as actors in the representation. By the time the different parts of the principal procession were assembled in the square, all the seats of the estrade were crowded, with the exception of those reserved for the bailiff and his immediate friends.

CHAPTER XIV.

"So once were ranged the sons of ancient Rome,
A noble show! while Roscius trod the stage."
—COWPER.

THE day was not yet far advanced, when all the component parts of the grand procession had arrived in the square. Shortly after, a flourish of clarions gave notice of the approach of the authorities. First came the bailiff, filled with the dignity of station, and watching, with a vigilant, but covert eye, every indication of feeling that might prove of interest to his employers, even while he most affected sympathy with the occasion and self-abandonment to the follies of the hour; for Peter Hofmeister owed his long-established favor with the bürgerschaft more to a never-slumbering regard to its exclusive interests and its undivided supremacy, than to any particular skill in the art of rendering men comfortable and happy. Next to the worthy bailiff—for apart from an indomitable resolution to maintain the authority of his masters for good or for evil, the Herr Hofmeister merited the appellation of a worthy man—came Roger de Blonay and his guest the Baron de Willading, marching *pari passu* at the side of the representative of Berne himself. There might have been some question how far the bailiff was satisfied with this arrangement of the difficult point of eti-

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quette, for he issued from his own gate with a sort of sidelong movement, that kept him nearly confronted to the Signor Grimaldi, though it left him the means of choosing his path and of observing the aspect of things in the crowd. At any rate, the Genoese, though apparently occupying a secondary station, had no grounds to complain of indifference to his presence. Most of the observances and not a few of the sallies of honest Peter, who had some local reputation as a joker and a *bel esprit*, as is apt to be the case with your municipal magistrate, more especially when he holds his authority independently of the community with whom he associates, and perhaps as little likely to be the fact when he depends on popular favor for his rank, were addressed to the Signor Grimaldi. Most of these good things were returned in kind, the Genoese meeting the courtesies like a man accustomed to be the object of peculiar attentions, and possibly like one who rather rioted in the impunity from ceremonies and public observation, that he now happened to enjoy. Adelheid, with a maiden of the house of Blonay, closed the little train.

As all commendable diligence was used by the officers of the peace to make way for the bailiff, Herr Hofmeister and his companions were soon in their allotted stations, which, it is scarcely necessary to repeat, were the upper places on the estrade. Peter had seated himself, after returning numerous salutations, for none in a situation to catch his eye neglected so fair an opportunity to show their intimacy with the bailiff, when his wandering glance fell upon the happy visage of Father Xavier. Rising hastily, the bailiff went through a multitude of the formal ceremonies that distinguished the courtesy of the place and period, such as frequent wavings and liftings of the beaver, profound reverences, smiles that seemed to flow from the heart, and a variety of other tokens of extraordinary love and respect. When all were ended, he resumed his place by the side of Melchior de Willading, with whom he commenced a confidential dialogue.

"We know not, noble Freiherr" (he spoke in the vernacular of their common canton), "whether we have most reason to esteem or to disrelish these Augustines. While they do so many Christian acts to the travellers on their mountain yonder, they are devils incarnate in the way of upholding popery and its abominations among the people. Look you, the commonalty—God bless them as they deserve!—have no great skill at doctrinal discussions, and are much disposed to be led away by appearances. Numberless are the miserable dolts who fancy the godliness which is content to pass its time on the top of a frozen hill, doing good, feeding the hungry, dressing the wounds of the fallen and—but thou knowest the manner in which these sayings run—the ignorant, as I was about to add, are but too ready to believe that the religion which leads men to do this, must have some savor of Heaven in it after all!"

"Are they so very wrong, friend Peter, that we were wise to disturb the monks in the enjoyment of a favor that is so fairly earned?"

The bailiff looked askance at his brother burgher, for such was the humble appellation that aristocracy assumed in Berne, appearing desirous of probing the depth of the other's political morals before he spoke more freely.

"Though of a house so honored and trusted, I believe thou art not much accustomed of late to mingle with the council?" he evasively observed.

"Since the heavy losses in my family, of which thou mayst have heard, the care of this sole surviving child has been my principal solace and occupation. I know not whether the frequent and near sight of death among those so tenderly loved may have softened my heart toward the Augustines, but to me theirs seems a self-denying and a right worthy life."

"'Tis doubtless as you say, noble Melchior, and we shall do well to let our love for the holy canons be seen. Ho! Mr. Officer—do us the favor to request the reverend monk of St. Bernard to draw nearer, that the people may learn the esteem in which their patient charities and never-wearying benevolence are held by the lookers-on. As you will have occasion to pass the night beneath the convent's roof, Herr von Willading, in your journey to Italy, a little honor shown to the honest and painstaking clavier will not be lost on the brotherhood, if these churchmen have even a decent respect for the usages of their fellow-creatures."

Father Xavier took the proffered place, which was nearer to the person of the bailiff

than the one he had just quitted, and insomuch the more honorable, with the usual, thanks but with a simplicity which proved that he understood the compliment to be due to the fraternity of which he was a member, and not to himself. This little disposition made, as well as all other preliminary matters properly observed, the bailiff seemed satisfied with himself and his arrangements for the moment.

The reader must imagine the stir in the throng, the importance of the minor agents appointed to marshal the procession, and the mixture of weariness and curiosity that possessed the spectators, while the several parts of so complicated and numerous a train were getting arranged, each in its prescribed order and station. But, as the ceremonies which followed were of a peculiar character, and have an intimate connection with the events of the tale, we shall describe them with a little detail, although the task we have allotted to ourselves is less that of sketching pictures of local usages, and of setting before the reader's imagination scenes of real or fancied antiquarian accuracy, than the exposition of a principle, and the wholesome moral which we have always flattered ourselves might, in a greater or less degree, follow from our labors.

A short time previous to the commencement of the ceremonies, a guard of honor, composed of shepherds, gardeners, mowers, reapers, vine-dressers, escorted by halberdiers and headed by music, had left the square in quest of the abbé, as the regular and permanent presiding officer of the abbaye, or company, is termed. This escort, all the individuals of which were dressed in character, was not long in making its appearance with the officer in question, a warm, substantial citizen and proprietor of the place, who, otherwise attired in the ordinary costume of his class in that age, had decorated his beaver with a waving plume, and, in addition to a staff or baton, wore a floating scarf pendent from his shoulder. This personage, on whom certain judicial functions had devolved, took a convenient position in the front of the stage, and soon made a sign for the officials to proceed with their duties.

Twelve vine-dressers led by a chief, each having his person more or less ornamented with garlands of vine-leaves, and bearing other emblems of his calling, marched in a body chanting a song of the fields. They escorted two of their number who had been pronounced the most skilful and successful in cultivating the vineyards of the adjacent côtes. When they reached the front of the estrade, the abbé pronounced a short discourse in honor of the cultivators of the earth in general, after which he digressed into especial eulogiums on the successful candidates—two pleased, abashed, and unpractised peasants, who received the simple prizes with throbbing hearts. This little ceremony observed, amid the eager and delighted gaze of friends, and the oblique and discontented regards of the few whose feelings were too contracted to open to the joys of others, even on this simple and grateful festival, the trumpets sounded again, and the cry was raised to make room.

A large group advanced from among the body of the actors to an open space, of sufficient size and elevation, immediately in front of the stage. When in full view of the multitude, those who composed it arranged themselves in a prescribed and seemly order. They were the officials of Bacchus. The high priest, robed in a sacrificial dress, with flowing beard, and head crowned with the vine, stood foremost, chanting in honor of the craft of the vine-dresser. His song also contained a few apposite allusions to the smiling, blushing candidates. The whole joined in the chorus, though the leader of the band scarce needed the support of any other lungs than those with which he had been very amply furnished by nature.

The hymn ended, a general burst of instrumental music succeeded; and, the followers of Bacchus regaining their allotted station, the general procession began to move, sweeping round the whole area of the square in a manner to pass in order before the bailiff.

The first body in the march was composed of the council of the abbaye, attending by the shepherds and gardeners. One, in an antique costume, and bearing a halberd, acted as marshal. He was succeeded by the two crowned vine-dressers, after whom came the abbé with his counsellors, and large groups of shepherds and shepherdesses, as well as a

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number of both sexes who toiled in gardens, all attired in costumes suited to the traditions of their respective pursuits. The marshal and the officers of the abbaye moved slowly past, with the gravity and decorum that became their stations, occasionally halting to give time for the evolutions of those who followed; but the other actors now began in earnest to play their several parts. A group of young shepherdesses, clad in closely fitting vests of sky-blue, with skirts of white, each holding her crook, came forward, dancing and singing songs that imitated the bleatings of their flocks, and all the other sounds familiar to the elevated pasturages of that region. These were soon joined by an equal number of young shepherds, also singing their pastorals, the whole exhibiting an active and merry group of dancers, accustomed to exercise their art on the sward of the Alps; for in this festival, although we have spoken of the performers as actors, it is not in the literal meaning of the term, since, with few exceptions, none appeared to represent any other calling than that which in truth formed his or her daily occupation. We shall not detain the narrative to say more of this party, than that they formed a less striking exception to the conventional picture of the appearance of those engaged in tending flocks than the truth ordinarily betrays; and that their buoyant gayety, blooming faces, and unwearied action formed a good introductory preparation for the altation that was to follow.

The male gardeners appeared in their aprons, carrying spades, rakes, and the other implements of their trade; the females supporting baskets on their heads filled with rich flowers, vegetables, and fruits. When in front of the bailiff, the young men formed a sort of fasces of their several implements, with a readiness that denoted much study, while the girls arranged their baskets in a circle at its foot. Then, joining hands, the whole whirled around, filling the air with a song peculiar to tneir pursuits.

During the whole of the preparations of the morning, Adelheid had looked on with a vacant eye, as if her feelings had little connection with that which was passing before her face. It is scarcely necessary to say, that her mind, in spite of herself, wandered to other scenes, and that her truant thoughts were busy with interests very different from those which were here presented to the senses. But, by the time the group of gardeners had passed dancing away, her feelings began to enlist with those who were so evidently pleased with themselves and all around them, and her father, for the first time that morning, was rewarded for the deep attention with which he watched the play of her features, by an affectionate and natural smile.

"This goes off right merrily, Herr Bailiff," exclaimed the Baron, animated by that encouraging smile, as the blood is quickened by a genial ray of the sun's heat when it has been long chilled and deadened by cold— "This goes off with a joyful will, and is likely to end with credit to thy town! I only wonder that you have not more of this, and monthly. When joy can be had so cheap, it is churlish to deny it to a people."

"We complain not of the levities, noble Freiherr, for your light thinker makes a sober and dutiful subject; but we shall have more of this, and of a far better quality, or our time is wasted. What is thought at Berne, noble Melchior, of the prospects of the Emperor's obtaining a new concession for the levy of troops in our cantons?"

"I cry thy mercy, good Peterchen, but by thy leave we will touch on these matters more at our leisure. Boyish though it seem to thy eyes, so long accustomed to look at matters of state, I do confess that these follies begin to have their entertainment, and may well claim an hour of idleness from him that has nothing better in hand."

Peter Hofmeister ejaculated a little expressively. He then examined the countenance of the Signor Grimaldi, who had given himself to the merriment with the perfect goodwill and self-abandonment of a man of strong intellect, and who felt his powers too sensibly to be jealous of appearances. Shrugging his shoulders, like one that was disappointed, the pragmatical bailiff turned his look toward the revellers, in order to detect, if possible, some breach of the usages of the country, that might require official reproof; for Peter was of that class of governors who have an itching to see their fingers stirring even the air that is breathed by the people, lest they should get it of a quality or in a quantity

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that might prove dangerous to a monopoly which it is now the fashion to call the conservative principle. In the meantime the revels proceeded.

No sooner had the gardeners quitted the arena, than a solemn and imposing train appeared to occupy the sward. Four females marched to the front, bearing an antique altar that was decorated with suitable devices. They were clad in emblematical dresses, and wore garlands of flowers on their heads. Boys carrying censers preceded an altar that was dedicated to Flora, and her ministering official came after it, mitred and carrying flowers. Like all the priestesses that followed, she was laboriously attired in the robes that denoted her sacred duty. The goddess herself was borne by four females on a throne canopied by flowers, and from whose several parts sweeping festoons of every hue and dye descended to the earth. Haymakers of both sexes, gay and pastoral in their air and attire, succeeded, and a car groaning with the sweet-scented grass of the Alps, accompanied by females bearing rakes, brought up the rear.

The altar and the throne being deposited on the sward, the priestess offered sacrifice, hymning the praise of the goddess with mountain lungs. Then followed the dance of the haymakers, as in the preceding exhibition, and the train went off as before.

"Excellent well, and truer than it could be done by your real pagan!" cried the bailiff, who, in spite of his official longings began to watch the mummery with a pleased eye. "This beateth greatly our youthful follies in the Genoese and Lombard cardinals, in which, to say truth, there are sometimes seen rare niceties in the way of representing the old deities."

"Is it the usage, friend Hofmeister," demanded the Baron, "to enjoy these admirable pleasantries often here in Vaud?"

"We partake of them, from time to time, as the abbaye desires, and much as thou seest. The honorable Signor Grimaldi—who will pardon me that he gets no better treatment than he receives, and who will not fail to ascribe what, to all who know him, might otherwise pass for inexcusable neglect, to his own desire for privacy—he will tell us, should he be pleased to honor us with his real opinion, that the subject is none the worse for occasions to laugh and be gay. Now, there is Geneva, a town given to subtleties as ingenious and complicated as the machinery of their own watches; it can never have a merry-making without a leaven of disputation and reason, two as damnable ingredients in the public humor as schism in religion, or two minds in a *ménage*. There is not a knave in the city who does not fancy himself a better man than Calvin, and some there are who believe if they are not cardinals, it is merely because the reformed Church does not relish legs cased in red stockings. By the word of a bailiff! I would not be the ruler, look ye, of such a community, for the hope of becoming Avoyer of Berne itself. Here it is different. We play our antics in the shape of gods and goddesses like sober people, and, when all is over, we go to train our vines, or count our herds, like faithful subjects of the great canton. Do I state the matter fairly to our friends, Baron de Blonay?"

Roger de Blonay bit his lip, for he and his had been of Vaud a thousand years, and he little relished the allusion to the quiet manner in which his countrymen submitted to a compelled and foreign dictation. He bowed a cold acquiescence to the bailiff's statement, however, as if no further answer were needed.

"We have other ceremonies that invite our attention," said Melchior de Willading, who had sufficient acquaintance with his friend's opinions to understand his silence.

The next group that approached was composed of those who lived by the products of the dairy. Two cowherds led their beasts, the monotonous tones of whose heavy bells formed a deep and rural accompaniment to the music that regularly preceded each party, while a train of dairy-girls, and of young mountaineers of the class that tend the herds in the summer pasturages, succeeded, a car loaded with the implements of their calling bringing up the rear. In this little procession, no detail of equipment was wanting. The milking-stool was strapped to the body of the dairyman; one had the peculiary constructed pail in his hand, while another bore at his back the deep wooden vessel in which milk is carried up and down the precipices to the châlet. When they reached the sodden

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arena, the men commenced milking the cows, the girls set in motion the different processes of the dairy, and the whole united in singing the Ranz des Vaches of the district. It is generally and erroneously believed that there is a particular air which is known throughout Switzerland by this name, whereas, in truth, nearly every canton has its own song of the mountains, each varying from the others in the notes, as well as in the words, and we might almost add in the language. The Ranz des Vaches of Vaud is in the patois of the country, a dialect that is composed of words of Greek and Latin origin, mingled on a foundation of Celtic. Like our own familiar tune, which was first bestowed in derision, and which a glorious history has enabled us to continue in pride, the words are far too numerous to be repeated. We shall, however, give the reader a single verse of a song which Swiss feeling has rendered so celebrated, and which is said often to induce the mountaineer in foreign service to desert the mercenary standard and the tame scenes of the towns, to return to the magnificent nature that haunts his waking imagination and embellishes his dreams. It will at once be perceived that the power of this song is chiefly to be found in the recollections to which it gives birth, by recalling the simple charms of rural life, and by reviving the indelible impressions that are made by nature wherever she has laid her hand on the face of the earth with the same majesty as in Switzerland.

Lé zermailli del Colombette
Dé bon matin, sé san léha—

REFRAIN.

Ha, ah ! ha, ah !
Liauba ! Liauba ! por aria.
Venidé toté,
Bllantz' et naire,
Rodz et motaile,
Dzjouvan' et etro
Dezó ou tzehano,
Io vo z' ario
Dezo ou triembllo,
Io ie triudzo,
Liauba ! Liauba ! por aria.*

* The cowherds of the Alps
Arise at an early hour.

CHORUS.

Ha, ah ! ha, ah !
Liauba ! Liauba ! in order to milk.

The music of the mountains is peculiar and wild, having most probably received its inspiration from the grandeur of the natural objects. Most the sounds partake of the character of echoes, being high-keyed but false notes; such as the rocks send back to the valleys, when the voice is raised above its natural key in order to reach the caverns and savage recesses of inaccessible precipices. Strains like these readily recall the glens and the magnificence amid which they were first heard, and hence, by an irresistible impulse, the mind is led to indulge in the strongest of all its sympathies, those which are mixed with the unalloyed and unsophisticated delights of buoyant childhood.

The herdsmen and dairymaids no sooner uttered the first notes of this magic song, than a deep and breathing stillness pervaded the crowd. As the peculiar strains of the chorus rose on the ear murmuring echoes issued from among the spectators, and ere the wild intonations could be repeated which accompanied the words "Liauba! Liauba!" a thousand voices were lifted simultaneously, as it were to greet the surrounding mountains with the salutations of their children. From that moment the remainder of the Ranz des Vaches was a common burst of enthusiasm, the offspring of that national fervor which forms so strong a link in the social chain, and which is capable of recalling to the bosom that, in other respects, has been hardened by vice and crime, a feeling of some of the purest sentiments of our nature.

The last strain died amidst this general exhibition of healthful feeling. The cowherds and the dairy girls collected their different implements, and resumed their march to the melancholy music of the bells, which formed a deep contrast to the wild notes that had just filled the square.

To these succeeded the followers of Ceres, with the altar, the priestess, and the en-

Come all of you,
Black and white,
Red and mottled,
Young and old ;
Beneath this oak
I am about to milk you,
Beneath this poplar,
I am about to press,
Liauba ! Liauba ! in order to milk.

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throned goddess, as has been already described in the approach of Flora. Cornucopiæ ornamented the chair of the deity, and the canopy was adorned with the gifts of autumn. The whole was surrounded by a sheaf of wheat. She held the sickle as her sceptre, and a tiara composed of the bearded grain covered her brow. Reapers followed, bearing emblems of the season of abundance, and gleaners closed the train. There was the halt, the chant, the chorus, and the song in praise of the beneficent goddess of autumn, as had been done by the votaries of the deity of flowers. A dance of the reapers and gleaners followed, the threshers flourished their flails, and the whole went their way.

After these came the grand standard of the abbaye, and the vine-dressers; the real objects of the festival succeeded. The laborers of the spring led the advance, the men carrying their picks and spades, and the women vessels to contain the cuttings of the vines. Then came a train bearing baskets loaded with the fruit, in its different degrees of perfection and of every shade of color. Youths holding staves topped with miniature representations of the various utensils known in the culture of the grape, such as the laborer with the tub on his back, the butt, and the vessel that first receives the flowing juice, followed. A great number of men, who brought forward the forge that is used to prepare the tools, closed this part of the exhibition. The song and the dance again succeeded, when the whole disappeared at a signal given by the approaching music of Bacchus. As we now touch upon the most elaborate part of the representation, we seize the interval that is necessary to bring it forward, in order to take breath ourselves.

CHAPTER XV.

"And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
That stand'st between her father's ground and mine,
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne."

—*Midsummer Night's Dream.*

"'Odds my life, but this goes off with a grace, brother Peter!" exclaimed the Baron de Willading, as he followed the vine-dressers in their retreat, with an amused eye—"If we have much more like it, I shall forget the dignity of the bürgerschaft, and turn mummer with the rest, though my good name for wisdom were the forfeit of the folly."

"That is better said between ourselves than performed before the vulgar eye, honorable Melchior. It would sound ill, of a truth, were these Vaudois to boast that a noble of thy estimation in Berne were thus to forget himself."

"None of this!—are we not here to be merry, and to laugh, and to be pleased with any folly that offers? A truce, then, to thy official distrusts and superabundant dignity, honest Peterchen," for such was the good-natured name by which the worthy bailiff was most commonly addressed by his friends; "let the tongue freely answer to the heart, as if we were boys rioting together, as was once the case, long ere thou wert thought of for this office, or I knew a sorrowful hour."

"The Signor Grimaldi shall judge between us; I maintain that restraint is necessary to those in high trusts."

"I will decide when the actors have all played their parts," returned the Genoese, smiling; "at present, here cometh one to whom all old soldiers pay homage. We will not fail of respect in so great a presence, on account of a little difference in taste."

Peter Hofmeister was not a small drinker, and as the approach of the god of the cup was announced by a flourish from some twenty instruments made to speak on a key suited to the vault of heaven, he was obliged to reserve his opinions for another time. After the passage of the musicians and a train of the abbaye's servants, for especial honors were paid to the ruby deity, there came three officials of the sacrifice, one leading a goat with gilded horns, while the two others bore the knife and the hatchet. To these succeeded the altar adorned with vines, the incense bearers, and the high-priest of Bacchus, who led the way for the appearance of the youthful god himself. The deity was seated astride on a cask, his head encircled with a garland of generous grapes, bearing a cup in one hand, and a vine-entwined and fruit-crowned sceptre in the other. Four Nubians carried him on their shoulders, while others shaded his form with an appropriate canopy;

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fauns wearing tiger-skins, and playing their characteristic antics, danced in his train, while twenty laughing and light-footed Bacchantes flourished their instruments, moving in measure in the rear.

A general shout in the multitude preceded the appearance of Silenus, who was sustained in his place on an ass by two blackamoors. The half-empty skins at his side, the vacant laugh, the foolish eye, the lolling tongue, the bloated lip, and the idiotic countenance, gave reason to suspect that there was a better motive for their support than any which belonged to the truth of the representation. Two youths then advanced bearing on a pole a cluster of grapes that nearly descended to the ground, and which was intended to represent the fruit brought from Canaan by the messengers of Joshua—a symbol much affected by the artists and mummers of the other hemisphere, on occasions suited to its display. A huge vehicle, ycleped the ark of Noah, closed the procession. It held a wine-press, having its workmen embowered among the vines, and it contained the family of the second father of the human race. As it rolled past, traces of the rich liquor were left in the tracks of its wheels.

Then came the sacrifice, the chant, and the dance, as in most of the preceding exhibitions, each of which, like this of Bacchus, had contained allusions to the peculiar habits and attributes of the different deities. The bacchanal that closed the scene was performed in character; the trumpets flourished and the procession departed in the order in which it had arrived.

Peter relented a little from his usual political reserve, as he witnessed these games in honor of a deity to whom he so habitually did practical homage, for it was seldom that this elaborate functionary, who might be termed quite a doctrinaire in his way, composed his senses in sleep without having pretty effectually steeped them in the liquor of the neighboring hills; a habit that was of far more general use among men of his class in that age than in this of ours, which seems so eminently to be the season of sobriety.

"This is not amiss, of a verity," observed the contented bailiff, as the Fauns and Bacchantes moved off the sward, capering and cutting their classical antics with far more agility and zeal than grace. "This looks like the inspiration of good wine, Signor Genoese, and were the truth known, it would be found that the rogue who plays the part of the fat person on the ass—how dost call the knave, noble Melchior?"

"Body o' me! if I am wiser than thyself, worthy bailiff; it is clearly a rogue who can never have done his mummery so expertly, without some aid from the flask."

"'Twill be well to know the fellow's character, for there may be occasion to commend him to the gentlemen of the abbaye, when all is over. Your skilful ruler has two great instruments that he need use with discretion, Baron de Willading, and these are, fear and flattery; and Berne hath no servant more ready to apply both, or either, as there may be necessity, than one of her poor bailiffs that hath not received all his dues from the general opinion, if truth were spoken. But it is well to be prepared to speak these good people of the abbaye fairly, touching their exploits. Harkee, master halberdier; thou art of Vévey, I think, and a warm citizen in thy every-day character, or my eyes do us both injustice!"

"I am, as you have said, Monsieur le Bailli, a Vévaisan, and one that is well known among our artisans."

"True, that was visible, spite of thy halberd. Thou art, no doubt, rarely gifted, and taught to the letter in these games. Wilt name the character that has just ridden past on the ass—he that hath so well enacted the drunkard, I mean? His name hath gone out of our minds for the moment, though his acting never can, for a better performance of one overcome by liquor is seldom seen."

"Lord keep you! worshipful bailiff, that is Antoine Giraud, the fat butcher of La Tour de Peil, and a better at the cup there is not in all the country of Vaud! No wonder that he hath done his part so readily; for, while the others have been reading in books, or drilling like so many awkward recruits under the schoolmaster, Antoine hath had little more to perform than to dip into the skin at his elbow. When the officers of the abbaye complain, lest he should disturb the ceremonies, he bids them not to make fools of themselves, for every swallow he gives is just so much done in honor of the represen-

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tation; and he swears, by the creed of Calvin! that there shall be more truth in his acting than in that of any other of the whole party."

"Odds my life! the fellow hath humor as well as good acting in him—this Antoine Giraud! Will you look into the written order they have given us, fair Adelheid, that we may make sure this artisan-halberdier hath not deceived us? We in authority must not trust a Vévaisan too lightly."

"It will be vain, I fear, Herr Bailiff, since the characters, and not the names of the actors, appear in the lists. The man in question represents Silenus I should think, judging from his appearance and all the other circumstances."

"Well, let it be as thou wilt. Silenus himself could not play his own part better than it hath been done by this Antoine Giraud. The fellow would gain gold like water at the court of the Emperor as a mime, were he only advised to resort thither. I warrant you, now, he would do Pluto, or Minerva, or any other god, just as well as he hath done this rogue Silenus!"

The honest admiration of Peter, who, sooth to say, had not much of the learning of the age, as the phrase is, raised a smile on the lip of the beauteous daughter of the Baron, and she glanced a look to catch the eye of Sigismund, toward whom all her secret sympathies, whether of sorrow or of joy, so naturally and so strongly tended. But the averted head, the fixed attention, and the nearly immovable and statue-like attitude in which he stood, showed that a more powerful interest drew his gaze to the next group. Though ignorant of the cause of his intense regard, Adelheid instantly forgot the bailiff, his dogmatism, and his want of erudition, in the wish to examine those who approached.

The more classical portion of the ceremonies was now duly observed. The council of the abbaye intended to close with an exhibition that was more intelligible to the mass of the spectators than anything which had preceded it, since it was addressed to the sympathies and habits of every people, and in all conditions of society. This was the spectacle that so engrossingly attracted the attention of Sigismund. It was termed the procession of the nuptials, and it was now slowly advancing to occupy the space left vacant by the retreat of Antoine Giraud and his companions.

There came in front the customary band, playing a lively air which use has long appropriated to the festivities of Hymen. The lord of the Manor, or, as he was termed, the Baron, and his lady partner led the train, both apparelled in the rich and quaint attire of the period. Six ancient couples, the representatives of happy married lives, followed by a long succession of offspring of every age, including equally the infant at the breast and the husband and wife in the flower of their days, walked next to the noble pair. Then appeared the section of the dwelling, which was made to portray the interior of domestic economy, having its kitchen, its utensils, and most of the useful and necessary objects that may be said to compose the material elements of an humble *ménage*. Within this moiety of a house, one female plied the wheel, and another was occupied in baking. The notary, bearing the register beneath an arm, with hat in hand, and dressed in an exaggerated costume of his profession, strutted in the rear of the two industrious housemaids. His appearance was greated with a general laugh, for the spectators relished the humor of the caricature with infinite *goût*. But this sudden and general burst of merriment was as quickly forgotten in the desire to behold the bride and bridegroom, whose station was next to that of the officer of the law. It was understood that these parties were not actors, but that the abbaye had sought out a couple, of corresponding rank and means, who had consented to join their fortunes in reality on the occasion of this great jubilee, thereby lending to it a greater appearance of that genuine joy and festivity which it was the desire of the heads of the association to represent. Such a search had not been made without exciting deep interest in the simple communities which surrounded Vévey. Many requisites had been proclaimed to be necessary in the candidates—such as beauty, modesty, merit, and the submission of her sex, in the bride; and in her partner those qualities which might fairly entitle him to be the repository of the happiness of a maiden so endowed.

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Many had been the speculations of the Vévaisans touching the individuals who had been selected to perform these grave and important characters, which, for fidelity of representation, were to outdo that of Silenus himself; but so much care had been taken by the agents of the abbaye to conceal the names of those they had selected, that, until this moment, when disguise was no longer possible, the public was completely in the dark on the interesting point. It was so usual to make matches of this kind on occasions of public rejoicing, and marriages of convenience, as they are not unaptly termed, enter so completely into the habits of all European communities—perhaps we might say of all old communities—that common opinion would not have been violently outraged had it been known that the chosen pair saw each other for the second or third time in the procession, and that they had now presented themselves to take the nuptial vow, as it were, at the sound of the trumpet or beat of drum. Still, it was more usual to consult the inclinations of the parties, since it gave greater zest to the ceremony, and these selections of couples on public occasions were generally supposed to have more than the common interest of marriages, since they were believed to be the means of uniting, through the agency of the rich and powerful, those whom poverty or other adverse circumstances had hitherto kept asunder. Rumor spoke of many an inexorable father who had listened to reason from the mouths of the great, rather than balk the public humor; and thousands of pining hearts, among the obscure and simple, are even now gladdened at the approach of some joyous ceremony, which is expected to throw open the gates of the prison to the debtor and the criminal, or that of Hymen to those who are richer in constancy and affection than in any other stores.

A general murmur and a common movement betrayed the lively interest of the spectators, as the principal and real actors in this portion of the ceremonies drew near. Adelheid felt a warm glow on her cheek, and a gentler flow of kindness at her heart when her eye first caught a view of the bride and bridegroom, whom she was fain to believe a faithful pair that a cruel fortune had hitherto kept separate, and who were now willing to brave such strictures as all must encounter who court public attention, in order to receive the reward of their enduring love and self-denial. This sympathy, which was at first rather of an abstract and vague nature, finding its support chiefly in her own peculiar situation and the qualities of her gentle nature, became intensely heightened, however, when she got a better view of the bride. The modest mien, abashed eye, and difficult breathing of the girl, whose personal charms were of an order much superior to those which usually distinguish rustic beauty in those countries in which females are not exempted from the labors of the field, were so natural and winning as to awaken all her interest; and, with instinctive quickness, the lady of Willading bent her look on the bridegroom, in order to see if one whose appearance was so eloquent in her favor was likely to be happy in her choice. In age, personal appearance, and apparently in condition of life, there was no very great unfitness, though Adelheid fancied that the mien of the maiden announced a better breeding than that of her companion—a difference which she was willing to ascribe, however, to a greater aptitude in her own sex to receive the first impress of the moral seal, than that which belongs to man.

"She is fair," whispered Adelheid, slightly bending her head toward Sigismund, who stood at her side, "and must deserve her happiness."

"She is good, and merits a better fate!" muttered the youth, breathing so hard as to render his respiration audible.

The startled Adelheid raised her eyes, and strong but suppressed agitation was quivering in every lineament of her companion's countenance. The attention of those near was so closely drawn toward the procession, as to allow an instant of unobserved communication.

"Sigismund, this is thy sister!"

"God so cursed her."

"Why has an occasion, public as this, been chosen to wed a maiden of her modesty and manner?"

"Can the daughter of Balthazar be squeamish? Gold, the interest of the abbaye, and the foolish *éclat* of this silly scene, have en-

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abled my father to dispose of his child to yonder mercenary, who has bargained like a Jew in the affair, and who, among other conditions, has required that the true name of his bride shall never be revealed. Are we not honored by a connection which repudiates us even before it is formed!"

The hollow stifled laugh of the young man thrilled on the nerves of his listener, and she ceased the stolen dialogue to return to the subject at a more favorable moment. In the meantime the procession had reached the station in front of the stage, where the mummers had already commenced their rites.

A dozen groomsmen and as many female attendants accompanied the pair who were about to take the nuptial vow. Behind these came the *trousseau* and the *corbeille;* the first being that portion of the dowry of the bride which applies to her personal wants, and the last is an offering of the husband, and is figuratively supposed to be the pledge of the strength of his passion. In the present instance the trousseau was so ample, and betokened so much liberality, as well as means, on the part of the friends of a maiden who would consent to become a wife in a ceremony so public, as to create general surprise; while, on the other hand, a solitary chain of gold, of rustic fashion, and far more in consonance with the occasion, was the sole tribute of the swain. This difference between the liberality of the friends of the bride, and that of the individual, who, judging from appearances, had much the most reason to show his satisfaction, did not fail to give rise to many comments. They ended, as most comments do, by deductions drawn against the weaker and least defended of the parties. The general conclusion was so uncharitable as to infer that a girl thus bestowed must be under peculiar disadvantages, else would there have been a greater equality between the gifts; an inference that was sufficiently true, though cruelly unjust to its modest but unconscious subject.

While speculations of this nature were rife among the spectators, the actors in the ceremony began their dances, which were distinguished by the quaint formality that belonged to the politeness of the age. The songs that succeeded were in honor of Hymen and his votaries, and a few couplets that extolled the virtues and beauty of the bride were chanted in chorus. A sweep appeared at the chimney-top, raising his cry, in allusion to the business of the ménage, and then all moved away, as had been done by those who had preceded them. A guard of halberdiers closed the procession.

That part of the mummeries which was to be enacted in front of the estrade was now ended for the moment, and the different groups proceeded to various other stations in the town, where the ceremonies were to be repeated for the benefit of those who, by reason of the throng, had not been able to get a near view of what had passed in the square. Most of the privileged profited by the pause to leave their seats, and to seek such relaxations as the confinement rendered agreeable. Among those who entirely quitted the square were the bailiff and his friends, who strolled toward the promenade on the lake-shore, holding discourse, in which there was blended much facetious merriment concerning what they had just seen.

The bailiff soon drew his companions around him, in a deep discussion of the nature of the games, during which the Signor Grimaldi betrayed a malicious pleasure in leading on the dogmatic Peter to expose the confusion that existed in his head, touching the characters of sacred and profane history. Even Adelheid was compelled to laugh at the commencement of this ludicrous exhibition, but her thoughts were not long in recurring to a subject in which she felt a nearer and a more tender interest. Sigismund walked thoughtfully at her side, and she profited by the attention of all around them being drawn to the laughable dialogue just mentioned, to renew the subject that had been so lightly touched on before.

"I hope thy fair and modest sister will never have reason to repent her choice," she said, lessening her speed in a manner to widen the distance between herself and those she did not wish to overhear the words, while it brought her nearer to Sigismund; "'tis a frightful violence to all maiden feeling to be thus dragged before the eyes of the curious and vulgar, in a scene trying and solemn as that in which she plights her marriage vows!"

"Poor Christine! her fate from infancy has been pitiable. A purer or milder spirit than

hers, one that more sensitively shrinks from rude collision, does not exist; and yet, on whichever side she turns her eyes, she meets with appalling prejudices or opinions to drive a gentle nature like hers to madness. It may be a misfortune, Adelheid, to want instruction, and to be fated to pass a life in the depths of ignorance, and in the indulgence of brutal passions, but it is scarcely a blessing to have the mind elevated above the tasks which a cruel and selfish world so frequently imposes."

"Thou wast speaking of thy mild and excellent sister——"

"Well hast thou described her! Christine is mild, and more than modest—she is meek. But what can meekness itself do to palliate such a calamity? Desirous of averting the stigma of his family from all he could with prudence, my father caused my sister, like myself, to be early taken from the parental home. She was given in charge to strangers, under such circumstances of secrecy, as left her long, perhaps too long, in ignorance of the stock from which she sprang. When maternal pride led my mother to seek her daughter's society, the mind of Christine was in some measure formed, and she had to endure the humiliation of learning that she was one of a family proscribed. Her gentle spirit, however, soon became reconciled to the truth, at least so far as human observation could penetrate, and, from the moment of the first terrible agony, no one has heard her murmur at the stern decree of Providence. The resignation of that mild girl has ever been a reproach to my own rebellious temper, for, Adelheid, I cannot conceal the truth from thee—I have cursed all that I dared include in my wicked imprecations, in very madness at this blight of my hopes! Nay, I have even accused my father of injustice, that he did not train me at the side of the block, that I might take a savage pride in that which is now the bane of my existence. Not so with Christine; she has always warmly returned the affection of our parents, as a daughter should love the author of her being, while I fear I have been repining when I should have loved. Our origin is a curse entailed by the ruthless laws of the land, and it is not to be attributed to any, at least to none of these later days, as a fault; and such has ever been the language of my poor sister when she has seen a merit in their wishes to benefit us at the expense of their own natural affection. I would I could imitate her reason and resignation!"

"The view taken by thy sister is that of a female, Sigismund, whose heart is stronger than her pride; and, what is more, it is just."

"I deny it not; 'tis just. But the ill-judged mercy has forever disqualified me to sympathize as I could wish with those to whom I belong. 'Tis an error to draw these broad distinctions between our habits and our affections. Creatures stern as soldiers cannot bend their fancies like pliant twigs, or with the facility of female——"

"Duty," said Adelheid, gravely, observing that he hesitated.

"If thou wilt, duty. The word has great weight with thy sex, and I do not question that it should have with mine."

"Thou canst not be wanting in affection for thy father, Sigismund. The manner in which thou interposedst to save his life, when we were in the fearful jeopardy of the tempest, disproves thy words."

"Heaven forbid that I should be wanting in natural feeling of this sort, and yet, Adelheid, it is horrible not to be able to respect, to love profoundly, those to whom we owe our existence! Christine in this is far happier than I, an advantage that I doubt not she owes to her simple life, and to the closer intimacies which unite females. I am the son of a headsman; that bitter fact is never absent from my thoughts when they turn to home and those scenes in which I could so gladly take pleasure. Balthazar may have meant a kindness when he caused me to be trained in habits so different from his own, but, to complete the good work, the veil should never have been removed."

Adelheid was silent. Though she understood the feelings which controlled one educated so very differently from those to whom he owed his birth, her habits of thought were opposed to the indulgence of any reflections that could unsettle the reverence of the child for its parents.

"One of a heart like thine, Sigismund, cannot hate his mother!" she said, after a pause.

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"In this thou dost me no more than justice; my words have ill represented my thoughts, if they have left such an impression. In cooler moments, I have never considered my birth as more than a misfortune, and my education I deem a reason for additional respect and gratitude to my parents, though it may have disqualified me in some measure to enter deeply into their feelings. Christine herself is not more true, nor of more devoted love, than my poor mother. It is necessary, Adelheid, to see and know that excellent woman in order to understand all the wrongs that the world inflicts by its ruthless usages."

"We will now speak only of thy sister. Has she been here bestowed without regard to her own wishes, Sigismund?"

"I hope not. Christine is meek, but, while neither word nor look betrays the weakness, still she feels the load that crushes us both. She has long accustomed herself to look at all her own merits through the medium of this debasement, and has set too low a value on her own excellent qualities. Much, very much, depends, in this life, on our own habits of self-estimation, Adelheid; for he who is prepared to admit unworthiness—I speak not of demerit toward God, but toward men—will soon become accustomed to familiarity with a standard below his just pretensions, and will end perhaps in being the thing he dreaded. Such has been the consequence of Christine's knowledge of her birth, for, to her meek spirit, there is an appearance of generosity, in overlooking this grand defect, and it has too well prepared her mind to endow the youth with a hundred more of the qualities that are absolutely necessary to her esteem, but which I fear exist only in her own warm fancy."

"This is touching on the most difficult branch of human knowledge," returned Adelheid, smiling sweetly on the agitated brother; "a just appreciation of ourselves. If there is danger of setting too low a value on our merits, there is also some danger of setting too high; though I perfectly comprehend the difference you would make between vulgar vanity, and that self-respect which is certainly in some degree necessary to success. But one, like her thou hast described, would scarce yield her affections without good reason to think them well bestowed."

"Adelheid, thou, who hast never felt the world's contempt, canst not understand how winning respect and esteem can be made to those who pine beneath its weight! My sister hath so long accustomed herself to think meanly of her hopes, that the appearance of liberality and justice in this youth would have been sufficient of itself to soften her feelings in his favor. I cannot say I think—for Christine will soon be his wife—but will say, I fear that the simple fact of his choosing one that the world persecutes has given him a value in her eyes he might not otherwise have possessed."

"Thou dost not appear to approve of thy sister's choice?"

"I know the details of the disgusting bargain better than poor Christine," answered the young man, speaking between his teeth, like one who repressed bitter emotion. "I was privy to the greedy exactions on the one side, and to the humiliating concessions on the other. Even money could not buy this boon for Balthazar's child, without a condition that the ineffaceable stigma of her birth should be forever concealed."

Adelheid saw, by the cold perspiration that stood on the brow of Sigismund, how intensely he suffered, and she sought an immediate occasion to lead his thoughts to a less disturbing subject. With the readiness of her sex, and with the sensitiveness and delicacy of a woman that sincerely loved, she found means to effect the charitable purpose, without again alarming his pride. She succeeded so far in calming his feelings, that when they rejoined their companions, the manner of the young man had entirely regained the quiet and proud composure in which he appeared to take refuge against the consciousness of the blot that darkened his hopes, frequently rendering life itself a burden nearly too heavy to be borne.

CHAPTER XVI.

"——Come apace, good Audrey, I will fetch
Up your goats, Audrey: and how, Audrey? am
I the man yet? Doth my simple features content
You?" —*As You Like It.*

WHILE the mummeries related were exhibiting in the great square, Maso, Pippo,

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Conrad, and the others concerned in the little disturbance connected with the affair of the dog, were eating their discontent within the walls of the guard-house. Vévey had several squares, and the various ceremonies of the gods and demigods were now to be repeated in the smaller areas. On one of the latter stand the town-house and prison. The offenders in question had been summarily transferred to the jail, in obedience to the command of the officer charged with the preservation of the peace. By an act of grace, however, that properly belonged to the day as well as to the character of the offence, the prisoners were permitted to occupy a part of the edifice that commanded a view of the square, and consequently were not precluded from all participation in the joyousness of the festivities. This indulgence had been accorded on the condition that the parties should cease their wrangling, and otherwise conduct themselves in a way not to bring scandal on the exhibition in which the pride of every Vévaisan was so deeply enlisted. All the captives, the innocent as well as the guilty, gladly subscribed to the terms; for they found themselves in a temporary duress which did not admit of any fair argument of the merits of the case, and there is no leveller so effectual as a common misfortune.

The anger of Maso, though sudden and violent, the effect of a hot temperament, had quickly subsided in a calm which more probably belonged to his education and opinions, in all of which he was much superior to his profligate antagonist. Contempt, therefore, soon took the place of resentment; and though too much accustomed to rude contact with men of the pilgrim's class to be ashamed of what had occurred, the mariner strove to forget the occurrence. It was one of those moral disturbances to which he was scarcely less used, than he was accustomed to encounter physical contests of the elements like that in which he had lately rendered so essential service on the Leman.]

"Give me thy hand, Conrad," he said, with the frank forgiveness which is apt to distinguish the reconciliation of men who pass their lives among the violent, but sometimes ennobling scenes of adventure and lawlessness. "Thou hast thy humors and habits, and I have mine. If thou findest this trafficking in penances and prayers to thy fancy, follow the trade, for Heaven's sake, and leave me and my dog to live by other means."

"Thou oughtst to have bethought thee how much reason we pilgrims have to prize the mastiffs of the mountains," answered Conrad, "and how likely it was to stir my blood to see another cur devouring that which was intended for old Uberto. Thou hast never toiled up the sides of St. Bernard, friend Maso, loaded with the sins of a whole parish, to say nothing of thine own, and therefore canst not know the value of these brutes who so often stand between us pilgrims and a grave of snow."

Il Maledetto smiled grimly, and muttered a sentence between his teeth; for, in perfect consonance with the frank lawlessness of his own life, there was a reckless honesty in his nature, which caused him to despise hypocrisy as unworthy of the bold attributes of manhood.

"Have it as thou wilt, pious Conrad," he said sneeringly, "so there be peace between us. I am, as thou knowest, an Italian, and though we of the south seek revenge occasionally of those who wrong us, it is not often that we do violence after giving a willing palm—I trust ye of Germany are no less honest?"

"May the Virgin be deaf to every ave I have sworn to repeat, and the good fathers of Loretto refuse absolution, if I think more of it! 'Twas but the gripe of a throat, and I am not so tender in that part of the body as to fear it is to be the forerunner of a closer squeeze. Didst ever hear a churchman that suffered in this way?"

"Men often escape with less than their deserts," Maso dryly answered. "Well, fortune, or the saints, or Calvin, or whatever power most suits your tastes, good friends, has at length put a roof over our heads,—an honor that rarely arrives to most of us, if I may judge by appearances and some little knowledge of the different trades we follow. Thou wilt have a fair occasion to suffer Policinello to rest from his uneasy antics, Pippo, while his master breathes the air through a window for the first time in many a day, as I will answer."

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The Neapolitan had no difficulty in laughing at this sally; for his was a nature that took all things pleasantly, though it took nothing under the corrective of principle or a respect for the rights of others.

"Were this Napoli, with her gentle sky and hot volcano," he said, smiling at the allusion, "no one would have less relish for a roof than myself."

"Thou wast born beneath the arch of some Duca's gateway," returned Maso, with a sort of reckless sarcasm that as often cut his friends as his enemies; "thou wilt probably die in the hospital of the poor, and wilt surely be shot from the death-cart into one of the daily holes of thy Campo Santo among a goodly company of Christians, in which arms and legs will be thrown at random like jackstraws, and the wisest among ye all will be puzzled to tell his own limbs from those of his neighbors, at the sound of the last trumpet."

"Am I a dog, to meet this end?" demanded Pippo, fiercely—"or that I should not know my own bones from those of some infidel rascal who may happen to be my neighbor?"

"We have had one disturbance about brutes, let us not have another," sarcastically rejoined Il Maledetto. "Princes and nobles," he added, with affected gravity, "we are here bound by the heels during the good pleasure of those who rule in Vévey; the wisest course will be to pass the time in good humor with each other, and as pleasantly as our condition will allow. The reverend Conrad shall have all the honors of a cardinal, Pippo shall have the led horse at his funeral, and as for these worthy Vaudois, who, no doubt, are men of substance in their way, they shall be bailiffs sent by Berne to rule between the four walls of our palace! Life is but a graver sort of mummery, gentlemen, and the second of its rarest secrets is to make others fancy us what we wish to appear—the first being, without question, the faculty of deceiving ourselves. Now each one has only to imagine that he is the high personage I have just named, and the most difficult part of the work is achieved to his hands."

"Thou hast forgotten to name thine own quality," cried Pippo, who was too much used to buffoonery not to relish the whim of Maso, and who, with Neapolitan fickleness, forgot his anger the instant he had given it vent.

"I will represent the sapient public, and, being well disposed to be duped, the whole job is complete. Practice away, worthies, and ye shall see with what open eyes and wide gullet I am ready to admire and swallow all your philosophy."

This sally produced a hearty laugh, which rarely fails to establish momentary good-fellowship. The Vaudois, who had the thirsty propensities of mountaineers, ordered wine, and, as their guardians looked upon their confinement more as a measure of temporary policy than of serious moment, the command was obeyed. In a short time, this little group of worldlings were making the best of circumstances, by calling in the aid of physical stimulants to cheer their solitude. As they washed their throats with the liquor, which was both good and cheap, and by consequence doubly agreeable, the true characters of the different individuals began to show themselves in stronger colors.

The peasants of Vaud, of whom there were three, and all of the lowest class, became confused and dull in their faculties, though louder and more vehement in speech, each man appearing to balance the increasing infirmities of his reason by stronger physical demonstrations of folly.

Conrad, the pilgrim, threw aside the mask entirely, if indeed so thin a veil as that he ordinarily wore when not in the presence of his employers deserved such a name, and appeared the miscreant he truly was—a strange admixture of cowardly superstition (for few meddle with superstition without getting more or less entangled in its meshes), of low cunning, and of the most abject and gross sensuality and vice. The invention and wit of Pippo, at all times ready and ingenious, gained increased powers, but the torrent of animal spirits that were let loose by his potations swept before it all reserve, and he scarce opened his mouth but to betray the thoughts of a man long practised in frauds and all other evil designs on the rights of his fellow-creatures. On Maso the wine produced an effect that might almost be termed characteristic, and which it is in some sort germane to the moral of the tale to describe.

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Il Maledetto had indulged freely and with apparent recklessness in the frequent draughts. He was long familiarized to the habits of this wild and uncouth fellowship, and a singular sentiment, that men of his class choose to call honor, and which perhaps deserves the name as much as half of the principles that are described by the same appellation, prevented him from refusing to incur an equal risk in the common assault on their faculties, inducing him to swallow his full share of the intoxicating fluid as the cup passed from one reeking mouth to another. He liked the wine, too, and tasted its perfume, and cherished its glowing influence, with the perfect good-will of a man who knew how to profit by the accident which placed such generous liquor at his command. He had also his designs in wishing to unmask his companions, and he thought the moment favorable to such an intention. In addition to these motives, Maso had his especial reasons for being uneasy at finding himself in the hands of the authorities, and he was not sorry to bring about a state of things that might lead to his being confounded with the others in a group of vulgar devotees of Bacchus.

But Maso yielded to the common disposition in a manner peculiar to himself. His eyes became even more lustrous than usual, his face reddened, and his voice even grew thick, while his senses retained their powers. His reason, instead of giving way, like those of the men around him, rather brightened under the excitement, as if it foresaw the danger it incurred, and the greater necessity there existed for vigilance. Though born in a southern clime, he was saturnine and cold when unexcited, and such temperaments rather gain their tone than lose their powers by stimulants under which men of feebler organizations sink. He had passed his life amid wild adventure and in scenes of peril which suited such a disposition, and it most probably required either some strong motive of danger, like that of the tempest on the Leman, or a stimulant of another quality, to draw out the latent properties of his mind, which so well fitted him to lead when others were the most disposed to follow. He was, therefore, without fear for himself while he aroused his companions; and he was free of his purse, which did not, however, appear to be sufficiently stored to answer very heavy demands, by ordering cup after cup to supply the place of those which were so quickly drained to the dregs. In this manner an hour or two passed swiftly, they who were charged with the care of the jolly party in the town-house being much more occupied in noting the festivities without, than those within, the prison.

"Thou hast a merry life of it, honest Pippo," cried Conrad, with swimming eyes, answering a remark of the buffoon. "Thou art but a laugh at the best, and wilt go through the world grinning and making others grin. Thy Policinello is a rare fellow, and I never meet one of thy set that weary legs and sore feet are not forgotten in his fooleries!"

"Corpo di Bacco!—I wish this were so; but thou hast much the best of the matter, even in the way of amusement, reverend pilgrim, though to the looker-on it would seem otherwise. The difference between us, pious Conrad, is just this—that thou laughest in thy sleeve without seeming to be merry, whereas I yawn ready to split my jaws while I seem to be dying with fun. Your often-told joke is a bad companion, and gets at last to be as gloomy as a dirge. Wine can be swallowed but once, and laughter will not come forever for the same folly. Cospetto! I would give the earnings of a year for a set of new jokes, such as might come fresh from the wit of one who never saw a mountebank, and are not worn threadbare with being rubbed against the brains of all the jokers in Europe."

"There was a wise man of old, of whom it is not probable that any of you have ever heard," observed Maso, "who has said that there was nothing new under the sun."

"He who said that never tasted of this liquor, which is as raw as if it were still running from the press," rejoined the pilgrim. "Knave, dost think that we are unknowing in these matters, that thou darest bring a pot of such lees to men of our quality? Go to, and see that thou doest us better justice in the next!"

"The wine is the same as that which first pleased you, but it is the nature of drunkenness to change the palate; and therein Solo-

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mon was right as in all other points," coolly remarked Il Maledetto. "Nay, friend, thou wilt scarce bring thy liquors again to those who do not know how to do them proper honor."

Maso thrust the lad who served them from the room, and he slipped a small coin into his hand, ordering him not to return. Inebriety had made sufficient ravages for his ends, and he was now desirous of stopping further excesses.

"Here come the mummers—gods and goddesses, shepherds and their lasses, and all the other pleasantries to keep us in humor! To do these Vévaisans justice, they treat us rarely; for ye see they send their players to amuse our retirement!"

"Wine! liquor! raw or ripe, bring us liquor!" roared Conrad, Pippo, and their pot-companions, who were much too drunk to detect the agency of Maso in defeating their wishes, though they were just drunk enough to fancy that what he said of the attention of the authorities was not only true but merited.

"How now, Pippo! art ashamed to be outdone in thine own craft, that thou bellowest for wine at the moment when the actors have come into the square to exhibit their skill?" cried the mariner. "Truly, we shall have a mean opinion of thy merit, if thou art afraid to meet a few Vaudois peasants in thy trade, —and thou a buffoon of Napoli!"

Pippo swore with pot-oaths that he defied the cleverest of Switzerland; for that he had not only acted on every mall and mole of Italy, but that he had exhibited in private before princes and cardinals, and that he had no superior on either side of the Alps. Maso profited by his advantage, and, by applying fresh goads to his vanity, soon succeeded in causing him to forget the wine, and in drawing him, with all the others, to the windows.

The processions, in making the circuit of the city, had now reached the square of the town-house, where the acting and exhibition were repeated, as has been already related in general terms to the reader. There were the officers of the abbaye, the vine-dressers, the shepherds and the shepherdesses, Flora, Ceres, Pales, and Bacchus, with all the others, attended by their several trains, and borne in state as became their high attributes. Silenus rolled from his ass, to the great joy of a thousand shouting blackguards, and to the infinite scandal of the prisoners at the windows, the latter affirming to a man that there was no acting in the case, but that the demigod was shamefully under the influence of too many potations that had been swallowed in his own honor.

We shall not go over the details of these scenes, which all who have ever witnessed a public celebration will readily imagine, nor is it necessary to record the different sallies of wit that, under the inspiration of the warm wines of Vévey and the excitement of the revels, issued from the group that clustered around the windows of the prison. All who have ever listened to low humor, that is rather deadened than quickened by liquor, will understand their character, and they who have not will scarcely be losers by the omission.

At length the different allegories drawn from the heathen mythology ended, and the procession of the nuptials came into the square. The meek and gentle Christine had appeared nowhere that day without awakening strong sympathy in her youth, beauty, and apparent innocence. Murmurs of approbation accompanied her steps, and the maiden, more accustomed to her situation, began to feel, probably for the first time since she had known the secret of her origin, something like that security which is an indispensable accompaniment of happiness. Long used to think of herself as one proscribed of opinion, and educated in the retirement suited to the views of her parents, the praises that reached her ear could not but be grateful, and they went warm and cheeringly to her heart, in spite of the sense of apprehension and uneasiness that had so long harbored there. Throughout the whole of the day, until now, she had scarce dared to turn her eyes to her future husband,—him who, in her simple and single-minded judgment, had braved prejudice to do justice to her worth; but, as the applause, which had been hitherto suppressed, broke out in loud acclamations in the square of the town-house, the color mantled brightly on her cheek, and she looked with modest pride at her companion, as if she would say in the

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silent appeal, that his generous choice would not go entirely without its reward. The crowd responded to the sentiment, and never did votaries of Hymen approach the altar seemingly under happier auspices.

The influence of innocence and beauty is universal. Even the unprincipled and half-intoxicated prisoners were loud in praise of the gentle Christine. One praised her modesty, another extolled her personal appearance, and all united with the multitude in shouting to her honor. The blood of the bridegroom began to quicken, and, by the time the train had halted in the open space near the building, immediately beneath the windows occupied by Maso and his fellows, he was looking about him in the exultation of a vulgar mind, which finds its delight in, as it is apt to form its judgments from, the suffrages of others.

"Here is a grand and beautiful festa!" said the hic-coughing Pippo, "and a most willing bride! San Gennaro bless thee, bella sposina, and the worthy man who is the stem of so fair a rose! Send us wine, generous groom and happy bride, that we may drink to the health of thee and thine!"

Christine changed color, and looked furtively around, for they who lie under the weight of the world's displeasure, though innocent, are sensitively jealous of allusions to the sore points in their histories. The feeling communicated itself to her companion, who threw distrustful glances at the crowd, in order to ascertain if the secret of his bride's birth were not discovered.

"A braver festa never honored an Italian corso," continued the Neapolitan, whose head was running on his own fancies, without troubling itself about the apprehensions and wishes of others. "A gallant array and a fair bride! Send us wine, felicissimi sposi, that we may drink to your eternal fame and happiness! Happy the father that calls thee daughter, bella sposa, and most honored the mother that bare so excellent a child! Scellerati, ye of the crowd, why do ye not bear the worthy parents in your arms, that all may see and do homage to the honorable roots of so rich a branch! Send us wine, buona gente, send us cups of merry wine!"

The cries and the figurative language of Pippo attracted the attention of the multitude, who were additionally amused by the mixture of dialects in which he uttered his appeals. The least important trifles, by giving a new direction to popular sympathies, frequently become the parents of grave events. The crowd, which followed the train of Hymen, had begun to weary with the repetition of the same ceremonies, and it now gladly lent itself to the episode of the felicitations and entreaties of the half-intoxicated Neapolitan.

"Come forth, and act the father of the happy bride, thyself, reverend and grave stranger," cried one in derision, from the throng. "So excellent an example will descend to thy children's children, in blessings on thy line."

A shout of laughter rewarded this retort. It put the quick-witted Neapolitan on his mettle, to produce a prompt and suitable reply.

"My blessing on the blushing rose!" he answered in an instant. "There are worse parents than Pippo, for he who lives by making others laugh deserves well of men, whereas there is your medico, who eats the bread of colics, and rheumatisms, and other foul diseases, of which he pretends to be the enemy, though San Gennaro to aid!—who is there so silly, as not to see that the knavish doctor and the knavish distemper play into each other's hands, as readily as Policinello and the monkey."

"Hast thou another worse than thyself that can be named?" cried he of the crowd.

"A score, and thou shalt be of the number. My blessing on the fair bride! thrice happy is she that hath a right to receive the benediction from one of so honest life as the merry Pippo. Speak not I the truth, figliola?"

Christine perceived that the hand of her companion was coldly releasing her own, and she felt the creeping sensation of the blood, which is the common attendant of extreme and humiliating shame. Still she bore up against the weakness, with that deep reliance on the justice of others which is usually the most strongly seated in those who are the most innocent; and she followed the procession, in its circuit, with a step whose trembling was mistaken for no more than the embarrassment natural to her situation.

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At this moment, as the mummers were wheeling past the town-house, and the air was filled with music, while a general movement stirred the multitude, a cry of alarm arose in the building. It was immediately succeeded by such a rush of bodies toward the spot, as indicates, in a throng, a sudden and general interest in some new and extraordinary event.

The crowd was beaten back and dispersed, the procession had disappeared, and there was an unusual appearance of activity and mystery among the officials of the place, before the cause of this disturbance began to be whispered among the few who remained in the square. The rumor ran that one of the prisoners, an athletic Italian mariner, had profited by the attention of all the other guardians of the place being occupied by the ceremonies, to knock down the solitary sentinel and to effect his escape, followed by all the drunkards who were able to run.

The evasion of a few lawless blackguards from their prison was not an event likely long to divert the attention of the curious from the amusements of the day, especially as it was understood that their confinement would have terminated of itself with the setting sun. But when the fact was communicated to Peter Hofmeister, the sturdy bailiff swore fifty harsh oaths at the impudence of the knaves, at the carelessness of their keepers, and in honor of the good cause of justice in general. After which he incontinently commanded that the runaways should be apprehended. This material part of the process achieved, he moreover ordered that they should be brought forthwith into his presence, even should he be engaged in the most serious of the ceremonies of the day. The voice of Peter speaking in anger was not likely to be unheard, and the stern mandate had scarcely issued from his lips, when a dozen of the common thief-takers of Vaud set about the affair in good earnest, and with the best possible intentions to effect their object. In the meantime the sports continued, and, as the day drew on, and the hour for the banquet approached, the good people began to collect once more in the great square to witness the closing scenes, and to be present at the nuptial benediction, which was to be pronounced over Jacques Colis and Christine by a real servitor of the altar, as the last and most important of the ceremonies of that eventful day.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Ay, marry; now unmuzzle your wisdom."
—*Rosalind.*

THE hour of noon was past, when the stage was a second time filled with the privileged. The multitude was again disposed around the area of the square, and the bailiff and his friends once more occupied the seats of honor in the centre of the long estrade. Procession after procession now began to reappear, for all had made the circuit of the city, and each had repeated its mummeries so often that the actors grew weary of their sports. Still, as the several groups came again into the high presence of the bailiff and the élite not only of their own country but of so many others, pride overcame fatigue, and the songs and dances were renewed with the necessary appearance of good will and zeal. Peter Hofmeister and divers others of the magnates of the canton were particularly loud in their plaudits on this repetition of the games, for, by a process that will be easily understood, they, who had been revelling and taking their potations in the marquees and booths while the mummers were absent, were more than qualified to supply the deficiencies of the actors by the warmth and exuberance of their own warmed imaginations. The bailiff, in particular, as became his high office and determined character, was unusually talkative and decided, both as respects the criticisms and encomiums he uttered on the various performances, making as light of his own peculiar qualifications to deal with the subject as if he were a common hack-reviewer of our own times, who is known to keep in view the quantity rather than the quality of his remarks, and the stipulated price he is to receive per line. Indeed the parallel would hold good in more respects than that of knowledge, for his language was unusually captious and supercilious, his tone authoritative, and his motive the desire to exhibit his own endowments rather than the wish he affected to manifest of setting forth the ex-

cellences of others. His speeches were more frequently than ever directed to the Signor Grimaldi, for whom there had suddenly arisen in his mind a still stronger gusto than that he had so liberally manifested, and which had already drawn so much attention to the deportment of this pleasing but modest stranger. Still, he never failed to compel all, within reach of a reasonable exercise of his voice, to listen to his oracles.

"Those that have passed, Brother Melchior," said the bailiff, addressing the Baron de Willading in the fraternal style of the bürgerschaft, while his eye was directed to the Genoese, in whom in reality he wished to excite admiration for his readiness in Heathen lore, "are no more than shepherds and shepherdesses of our mountains, and none of your gods and demigods, the former of which are to be known in this ceremony from all others by the fact that they are carried on men's shoulders, and the latter that they ride on asses, or have other conveniences natural to their wants. Ah! here we have the higher orders of the mummers in person—this comely creature is, in reality, Mariette Marron, of this country, as strapping a wench as there is in Vaud, and as impudent—but no matter! She is now the Priestess of Flora, and I'll warrant you there is not a horn in all our valleys that will bring a louder echo out of the rocks than this very priestess will raise with her single throat! That yonder on the throne is Flora herself, represented by a comely young woman, the daughter of a warm citizen here in Vévey, and one able to give her all the equipments she bears, without taxing the abbaye a doit. I warrant you that every flower about her was culled from their own garden!"

"Thou treatest the poetry of the ceremonies with so little respect, good Peterchen, that the goddess and her train dwindle into little more than vine-dressers and milkmaids beneath thy tongue."

"Of Heaven's sake, friend Melchior," interrupted the amused Genoese, "do not rob us of the advantage of the worthy bailiff's graphic remarks. Your Heathen may be well enough in his way, but surely he is none the worse for a few notes and illustrations that would do credit to a Doctor of Padova. I entreat you to continue, learned Peter, that we strangers may lose none of the niceties of the exhibition."

"Thou seest, Baron," returned the well-warmed bailiff, with a look of triumph, "a little explanation can never injure a good thing, though it were even the law itself! Ah! yon is Ceres and her company, and a goodly train they appear! These are the harvest-men and harvest-women, who represent the abundance of our country of Vaud, Signor Grimaldi, which, truth to say, is a fat land, and worthy of the allegory. These knaves, with the stools strapped to their nether parts, and carrying tubs, are cowherds, and all the others are more or less concerned with the dairy. Ceres was a personage of importance among the ancients, beyond dispute, as may be seen by the manner in which she is backed by the landed interest. There is no solid respectability, Herr von Willading, that is not fairly bottomed on broad lands. Ye perceive that the goddess sits on a throne whose ornaments are all taken from the earth; a sheaf of wheat tops the canopy; rich ears of generous grain are her jewels, and her sceptre is the sickle. These are but allegories, Signor Grimaldi, but they are illusions that give birth to wholesome thoughts in the prudent. There is no science that may not catch a hint from our games; politics, religion, or law—'tis all the same for the well-disposed and cunning."

"An ingenious scholar might even find an argument for the bürgerschaft in an allegory that is less clear," returned the amused Genoese. "But you have overlooked, signor bailiff, the instrument that Ceres carries in the other hand, and which is full to overflowing with the fruits of the earth;—that which so much resembles a bullock's horn, I mean."

"That is, out of question, some one of the utensils of the ancients; perhaps a milking-vessel in use among the gods and goddesses, for your deities of old were no bad housewives, and made a merit of their economy; and Ceres here, as is seen, is not ashamed of a useful occupation. By my faith, but this affair has been gotten up with a very creditable attention to the moral! But our dairy people are about to give us some of their airs."

Peterchen now put a stop to his classic lore, while the followers of Ceres arranged themselves in order and began to sing. The

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contagious and wild melody of the Ranz des Vaches rose in the square, and soon drew the absorbed and delighted attention of all within hearing, which, to say the truth, was little less than all who were within the limits of the town, for the crowd chiming in with the more regular artists, a sort of musical enthusiasm seized upon all present who came of Vaud and her valleys. The dogmatical but well-meaning bailiff, though usually jealous of his Bernese origin, and alive on system to the necessity of preserving the superiority of the great canton by all the common observances of dignity and reserve, yielded to the general movement, and shouted with the rest, under favor of a pair of lungs that nature had admirably fitted to sustain the chorus of a mountain song. This condescension in the deputy of Berne was often spoken of afterward with admiration, the simple-minded and credulous ascribing the exaltation of Peterchen to a generous warmth in their happiness and interests, while the more wary and observant were apt to impute the musical excess to a previous excess of another character, in which the wines of the neighboring côtes were fairly entitled to come in for a full share of the merit. Those who were nearest the bailiff were secretly much diverted with his awkward attempts at graciousness, which one fair and witty Vaudoise likened to the antics of one of the celebrated animals that are still fostered in the city which ruled so much of Switzerland, and from whom, indeed, the town and canton are both vulgarly supposed to have derived their common name; for, while the authority of Berne weighed so imperiously and heavily on its subsidiary countries, as is usual in such cases, the people of the latter were much addicted to taking an impotent revenge by whispering the pleasantest sarcasms they could invent against their masters. Notwithstanding this and many more criticisms on his performance, the bailiff enacted his part in the representation to his own entire satisfaction; and he resumed his seat with a consciousness of having at least merited the applause of the people, for having entered with so much spirit into their games, and with the hope that this act of grace might be the means of causing them to forget some fifty or a hundred of his other acts, which certainly had not possessed the same melodious and companionable features.

After this achievement the bailiff was reasonably quiet, until Bacchus and his train again entered the square. At the appearance of the laughing urchin who bestrode the cask, he resumed his dissertations with a confidence that all are apt to feel who are about to treat on a subject with which they have had occasion to be familiar.

"This is the god of good liquor," said Peterchen, always speaking to any one who would listen, although, by an instinct of respect, he chiefly preferred favoring the Signor Grimaldi with his remarks, "as may plainly be seen by his seat; and these are dancing attendants, to show that wine gladdens the heart;—yonder is the press at work, extracting the juices, and that huge cluster is to represent the grapes which the messengers of Joshua brought back from Canaan when sent to spy out the land, a history which I make no doubt you, signor, in Italy, have at your finger's ends."

Gaetano Grimaldi looked embarrassed, for, although well skilled in the lore of the heathen mythology, his learning as a male Papist and a laic was not particularly rich in the story of the Christian faith. At first he supposed that the bailiff had merely blundered in his account of the mythology, but, taxing his memory a little, he recovered some faint glimpses of the truth, a redemption of his character as a book-man, for which he was materially indebted to having seen some celebrated pictures on this very subject, a species of instruction in holy writ that is sufficiently common among those who inhabit the Catholic countries of the other hemisphere.

"Thou surely hast not overlooked the history of the gigantic cluster of grapes, signor!" exclaimed Peterchen, astonished at the apparent hesitation of the Italian. "'Tis the most beautiful of all the legends of the holy book. Ha! as I live, there is the ass without his rider;—what has become of the blackguard Antoine Giraud? The rogue has alighted to swallow a fresh draught from some booth, after draining his own skin to the bottom. This comes of neglect; a sober man, or at least one of a harder head, should have been put to the part;—for, look you,

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'tis a character that need stand at least a gallon, since the rehearsals alone are enough to take a common drinker off his centre."

The tongue of the bailiff ran on in accompaniment, during the time that the followers of Bacchus were going through with their songs and pageants, and when they disappeared, it gained a louder key, like the "rolling river that murmuring flows and flows forever," rising again on the ear, after the din of any adventitious noise has ceased.

"Now we may expect the pretty bride and her maids," continued Peterchen, winking at his companions, as the ancient gallant is wont to make a parade of his admiration of the fair; "the solemn ceremony is to be pronounced here, before the authorities, as a suitable termination to this happy day. Ah! my good old friend Melchior, neither of us is the man he was, or these skipping hoydens would not go through their pirouettes without some aid from our arms. Now dispose of yourselves, friends; for this is to be no acting, but a downright marriage, and it is meet that we keep a graver air. How! what means the movement among the officers?"

Peterchen had interrupted himself, for just at that moment the thief-takers entered the square in a body, inclosing in their centre a group, who had the mien of captives too evidently to be mistaken for honest men. The bailiff was peculiarly an executive officer; one of that class who believe that the enactment of a law is a point of far less interest than its due fulfilment. Indeed, so far did he push his favorite principle, that he did not hesitate sometimes to suppose shades of meaning in the different ordinances of the great council that existed only in his own brain, but which were, to do him justice, sufficiently convenient to himself in carrying out the constructions which he saw fit to put on his own duties. The appearance of an affair of justice was unfortunate for the progress of the ceremonies, Peterchen having some such relish for the punishment of rogues, and more especially for such as seemed to be an eternal reproach to the action of the Bernese system by their incorrigible misery and poverty, as an old coachman is proverbially said to maintain for the crack of the whip. All his judicial sympathies were not fully awakened on the present occasion, however, the criminals, though far from belonging to the more lucky of their fellow creatures, not being quite miserable enough in appearance to awaken all these powers of magisterial reproach and severity that lay dormant in the bailiff's moral temperament, ready at any time to vindicate the right of the strong against the innovations of the feeble and unhappy. The reader will at once have anticipated that the prisoners were Maso and his companions, who had been more successful in escaping from their keepers, than fortunate in evading the attempts to secure their persons a second time.

"Who are these that dare affront the ruling powers on this day of general good-will and rejoicing?" sternly demanded the bailiff. when the minions of the law and their captive stood fairly before him. "Do ye not know, knaves, that this is a solemn, almost a religious ceremony at Vévey—for so it would be considered by the ancients at least—and that a crime is doubly a crime when committed either in an honorable presence, on a solemn and dignified occasion like this, or against the authorities?—this last being always the gravest and greatest of all?"

"We are but indifferent scholars, worshipful baliff, as you may easily perceive by our outward appearance, and are to be judged leniently," answered Maso. "Our whole offence was a hot but short quarrel touching a dog, in which hands were made to play the part of reason, and which would have done little harm to any but ourselves, had it been the pleasure of the town authorities to have left us to decide the dispute in our own way. As you well say this is a joyous occasion, and we esteem it hard that we, of all Vévey, should be shut up on account of so light an affair and cut off from the merriment of the rest."

"There is reason in this fellow, after all," said Peterchen, in a low voice. "What is a dog more or less to Berne, and a public rejoicing to produce its end should go deep into the community. Let the men go, of God's name! and look to it, that all the dogs be beaten out of the square, that we may have no more folly."

"Please you, these are the men that have escaped from the authorities, after knocking down their keeper," the officer humbly observed.

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"How is this! Didst thou not say, fellow, that it was all about a dog?"

"I spoke of the reason of our being shut up. It is true that, wearied with breathing pent air, and a little heated with wine, we left the prison without permission; but we hope this little sally of spirit will be overlooked on account of the extraordinary occasion."

"Rogue, thy plea augments the offence. A crime committed on an extraordinary occasion becomes an extraordinary crime, and requires an extraordinary punishment, which I intend to see inflicted forthwith. You have insulted the authorities, and that is the unpardonable sin in all communities. Draw nearer, friends, for I love to let my reasons be felt and understood by those who are to be affected by my decisions, and this is a happy moment to give a short lesson to the Vévaisans—let the bride and bridegroom wait—draw nearer all, that ye may better hear what I have to say."

The crowd pressed more closely around the foot of the stage, and Peterchen, assuming a didactic air, resumed his discourse.

"The object of all authority is to find the means of its own support," continued the bailiff; "for unless it can exist, it must fall to the ground; and you are all sufficiently schooled to know that when a thing becomes of indifferent value, it loses most of its consideration. Thus government is established in order that it may protect itself; since without this power it could not remain a government, and there is not a man existing who is not ready to admit that even a bad government is better than none. But ours is particularly a good government, its greatest care on all occasions being to make itself respected, and he who respects himself is certain to have esteem in the eyes of others. Without this security we should become like the unbridled steed, or the victims of anarchy and confusion, aye, and damnable heresies in religion. Thus you see, my friends, your choice lies between the government of Berne, or no government at all; for when only two things exist, by taking one away the number is reduced half, and as the great canton will keep its own share of the institutions, by taking half away, Vaud is left as naked as my hand. Ask yourselves if you have any government but this? You know you have not. Were you quit of Berne, therefore, you clearly would have none at all. Officer, you have a sword at your side, which is a good type of our authority; draw it and hold it up, that all may see it. You perceive, my friends, that the officer hath a sword; but that he hath only one sword. Lay it at thy feet, officer. You perceive, friends, that having but one sword, and laying that sword aside, he no longer hath a sword at all! That weapon represents our authority, which laid aside becomes no authority, leaving us with an unarmed hand."

This happy comparison drew a murmur of applause, the proposition of Peterchen having most of the properties of a popular theory, being deficient in neither a bold assertion, a brief exposition, nor a practical illustration. The latter in particular was long afterward spoken of in Vaud, as an exposition little short of the well-known judgment of Solomon, who had resorted to the same keen-edged weapon in order to solve a point almost as knotty as this settled by the bailiff. When the approbation had a little subsided, the warmed Peterchen continued his discourse, which possessed the random and generalized logic of most of the dissertations that are uttered in the interests of things as they are, without paying any particular deference to things as they should be.

"What is the use of teaching the multitude to read and write?" he asked. "Had not Franz Kauffman known how to write, could he have imitated his master's hand, and would he have lost his head for mistaking another man's name for his own? a little reflection shows us he would not. Now, as for the other art, could the people read bad books had they never learned the alphabet? If there is a man present who can say to the contrary, I absolve him from his respect, and invite him to speak boldly, for there is no Inquisition in Vaud, but we invite argument. This is a free government, and a fatherly government, and a mild government, as ye all know; but this is not a government that likes reading and writing; reading that leads to the perusal of bad books, and writing that causes false signatures. Fellow citizens, for we are all equal with the exception of certain differ-

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ences that need not now be named, it is a government for your good, and therefore it is a government that likes itself, and whose first duty it is to protect itself and its officers at all hazards, even though it might by accident commit some seeming injustice. Fellow, canst thou read?"

"Indifferently, worshipful bailiff," returned Maso. "There are those who get through a book with less trouble than myself."

"I warrant you, now, he means a good book, but, as for a bad one, I'll engage the varlet goes through it like a wild boar! This comes of education among the ignorant! There is no more certain method to corrupt a community, and to rivet it in beastly practices, than to educate the ignorant. The enlightened can bear knowledge, for rich food dees not harm the stomach that is used to it, but it is hellebore to the ill fed. Education is an arm, for knowledge is power, and the ignorant man is but an infant, and to give him knowledge is like putting a loaded blunderbuss into the hands of a child. What can an ignorant man do with knowledge? He is as likely to use it wrong end uppermost as in any other manner. Learning is a ticklish thing; it was said by Festus to have maddened even the wise and experienced Paul, and what may we not expect it to do with your downright ignoramus? What is thy name, prisoner?"

"Tommaso Santi; sometimes known among my friends as San Tommaso; called by my enemies, Il Maledetto, and by my familiars, Maso."

"Thou hast a formidable number of aliases, the certain sign of a rogue. Thou hast confessed that thou canst read——"

"Nay, Signor Bailiff, I would not be taken to have said——"

"By the faith of Calvin, thou didst confess it, before all this goodly company! Wilt thou deny thine own words, knave, in the very face of justice? Thou canst read—thou hast it in thy countenance, and I would go nigh to swear, too, that thou hast some inkling of the quill, were the truth honestly said. Signor Grimaldi, I know not how you find this affair on the other side of the Alps, but with us. our greatest troubles come from these well-taught knaves, who, picking up knowledge fraudulently, use it with felonious intent, without thought of the wants and rights of the public."

"We have our difficulties, as is the fact wherever man is found with his selfishness and passions, Signor Bailiff; but are we not doing an ungallant act toward yonder fair bride, by giving the precedency to men of this cast? Would it not be better to dismiss the modest Christine, happy in Hymen's chains, before we enter more deeply into the question of the manacles of these prisoners?"

To the amazement of all who knew the bailiff's natural obstinacy, which was wont to increase instead of becoming more manageable in his cups, Peterchen assented to this proposition with a complaisance and apparent good-will, that he rarely manifested toward any opinion of which he did not think himself legitimately the father; though, like many others who bear that honorable title, he was sometimes made to yield the privileges of paternity to other men's children. He had shown an unusual deference to the Italian, however, throughout the whole of their short intercourse, and on no occasion was it less equivocal, than in the promptness with which he received the present hint. The prisoners and officers were commanded to stand aside, but so near as to remain beneath his eye, while some of the officials of the abbaye were ordered to give notice to the train, which awaited these arrangements in silent wonder, that it might now approach.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Go, wiser thou! and in thy scale of sense
Weigh thy opinion against Providence;
Call imperfection what thou fanciest such;
Say, here he gives too little, there too much;
Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,
And say, if man's unhappy, God's unjust."—POPE.

IT is unnecessary to repeat the list of characters that acted the different parts in the train of the village nuptials. All were there at the close of the ceremonies, as they had appeared earlier in the day, and as the last of the legal forms of the marriage was actually to take place in the presence of the bailiff, preparatory to the more solemn rites of the Church, the throng yielded to its

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curiosity, breaking through the line of those who were stationed to restrain its inroads, and pressing about the foot of the estrade in the stronger interest which reality is known to possess over fiction. During the day a thousand new inquiries had been made concerning the bride, whose beauty and mien were altogether so superior to what might have been expected of one who could consent to act the part she did on so public an occasion, and whose modest bearing was in such singular contradiction to her present situation. None knew, however, or, if it were known, no one chose to reveal, her history; and, as curiosity had been so keenly whetted by mystery, the rush of the multitude was merely a proof of the power which expectation, aided by the thousand surmises of rumor, can gain over the minds of the idle.

Whatever might have been the character of the conjectures made at the expense of poor Christine—and they were wanting in neither variety nor malice—most were compelled to agree in commending the diffidence of her air, and the gentle sweetness of her mild and peculiar beauty. Some, indeed, affected to see artifice in the former, which was pronounced to be far too excellent, or too much overdone, for nature. The usual amount of commonplace remarks was made, too, on the lucky diversity that was to be found in tastes, and on the happy necessity there existed of all being able to find the means to please themselves. But these were no more than the moral blotches that usually disfigure human commendation. The sentiment and sympathies of the mass were powerfully and irresistibly enlisted in favor of the unknown maiden—feelings that were very unequivocally manifested as she drew near the estrade, walking timidly through a dense lane of bodies, all of which were pressing eagerly forward to get a better view of her person.

The bailiff, under ordinary circumstances, would have taken in dudgeon this violation of the rules prescribed for the government of the multitude; for he was perfectly sincere in his opinions, absurd as so many of them were, and, like many other honest men who defeat the effects they would produce by forced constructions of their principles, he was a little apt to run into excesses of discipline. But in the present instance, he was rather pleased than otherwise to see the throng within the reach of his voice. The occasion, was, at best, but semi-official, and he was so far under the influence of the warm liquors of the côtes as to burn with the desire of putting forth still more liberally his flowers of eloquence and his stores of wisdom. He received the inroad, therefore, with an air of perfect good humor, a manifestation of assent that encouraged still greater innovations on the limits, until the space occupied by the principal actors in this closing scene was reduced to the smallest possible size that was at all compatible with their movements and comforts. In this situation of things the ceremonies proceeded.

The gentle flow of hope and happiness which was slowly increasing in the mild bosom of the bride, from the first moment of her appearance in this unusual scene to that in which it was checked by the cries of Pippo, had been gradually lessening under a sense of distrust, and she now entered the square with a secret and mysterious dread at the heart, which her inexperience and great ignorance of life served fearfully to increase. Her imagination magnified the causes of alarm into some prepared and designed insult. Christine, fully aware of the obloquy that pressed upon her race, had only consented to adopt this unusual mode of changing her condition, under a sensitive apprehension that any other would have necessarily led to the exposure of her origin. This fear, though exaggerated, and indeed causeless, was the result of too much brooding of late over her own situation, and of that morbid sensibility in which the most pure and innocent are, unhappily, the most likely to indulge. The concealment, as has already been explained, was that of her intended husband, who, with the subterfuge of an interested spirit, had hoped to mislead the little circle of his own acquaintances and gratify his cupidity at the cheapest possible rate to himself. But there is a point of self-abasement beyond which the perfect consciousness of right rarely permits even the most timid to proceed. As the bride moved up the lane of human bodies, her eye grew less disturbed and her step firmer,—for the pride of rectitude overcame the ordinary

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girlish sensibilities of her sex, and made her the steadiest at the very instant that the greater portion of females would have been the most likely to betray their weakness. She had just attained this forced but respectable tranquillity, as the bailiff, signing to the crowd to hush its murmurs and to remain motionless, arose, with a manner that he intended to be dignified, and which passed with the multitude for a very successful experiment in its way, to open the business in hand by a short address. The reader is not to be surprised at the volubility of honest Peterchen, for it was getting to be late in the day, and his frequent libations throughout the ceremonies would have wrought him up to even a much higher flight of eloquence, had the occasion and the company at all suited such a display of his powers.

"We have had a joyous day, my friends," he said; "one whose excellent ceremonies ought to recall to every one of us our dependence on Providence, our frail and sinful dispositions, and particularly our duties to the councils. By the types of plenty and abundance, we see the bounty of nature which is a gift from Heaven: by the different little failures that have been, perhaps, unavoidably made in some of the nicer parts of the exhibition—and I would here particularly mention the besotted drunkenness of Antoine Giraud, the man who has impudently undertaken to play the part of Silenus, as a fit subject of your attention, for it is full of profit to all hard-drinking knaves—we may see our own awful imperfections; while, in the order of the whole, and the perfect obedience of the subordinates, do we find a parallel to the beauty of a vigilant and exact police and a well-regulated community. Thus you see, that though the ceremony hath a Heathen exterior, it hath a Christian moral; God grant that we all forget the former, and remember the latter, as best becomes our several characters and our common country. And now, having done with the divinities and their legends—with the exception of that varlet Silenus, whose misconduct, I promise you, is not to be so easily overlooked—we will give some attention to mortal affairs. Marriage is honorable before God and man, and although I have never had leisure to enter into this holy state myself, owing to a variety of reasons, but chiefly from my being wedded, as it were, to the State, to which we all owe quite as much, or even greater duty, than the most faithful wife owes to her husband, I would not have you suppose that I have not a high veneration for matrimony. So far from this, I have looked on no part of this day's ceremonies with more satisfaction than these of the nuptials, which we are now called upon to complete in a manner suitable to the importance of the occasion. Let the bridegroom and the bride stand forth, that all may the better see the happy pair."

At the bidding of the bailiff, Jacques Colis led Christine upon the little stage prepared for their reception, where both were more completely in view of the spectators than they had yet been. The movement, and the agitation consequent on so public an exposure, deepened the bloom on the soft cheeks of the bride, and another and a still less equivocal murmur of applause arose in the multitude. The spectacle of youth, innocence, and feminine loveliness, strongly stirred the sympathies of even the most churlish and rude; and most present began to feel for her fears, and to participate in her hopes.

"This is excellent!" continued the well-pleased Peterchen, who was never half so happy as when he was officially providing for the happiness of others; "it promises a happy *ménage*. A loyal, frugal, industrious, and active groom, with a fair and willing bride, can drive discontent up any man's chimney. That which is to be done next, being legal and binding, must be done with proper gravity and respect. Let the notary advance—not him who hath so aptly played this character, but the commendable and upright officer who is rightly charged with these respectable functions—and we will listen to the contract. I recommend a decent silence, my friends, for the true laws and real matrimony are at the bottom—a grave affair at the best, and one never to be treated with levity; since a few words pronounced now in haste may be repented of for a whole life hereafter."

Everything was conducted according to the wishes of the bailiff, and with great decency of form. A true and authorized notary read aloud the marriage-contract, the instrument which contained the civic rela-

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tions and rights of the parties, and which only waited for the signatures to be complete. This document required, of course, that the real names of the contracting parties, their ages, births, parentage, and all those facts which are necessary to establish their identity, and to secure the rights of succession, should be clearly set forth in a way to render the instrument valid at the most remote period, should there ever arrive a necessity to recur to it in the way of testimony. The most eager attention pervaded the crowd as they listen to these little particulars, and Adelheid trembled in this delicate part of the proceedings, as the suppressed but still audible breathing of Sigismund reached her ear, lest something might occur to give a rude shock to his feelings. But it would seem the notary had his cue. The details touching Christine was so artfully arranged, that while they were perfectly binding in law, they were so dexterously concealed from the observation of the unsuspecting, that no attention was drawn to the point most apprehended by their exposure. Sigismund breathed freer when the notary drew near the end of his task, and Adelheid heard the heavy breath he drew at the close, with the joy one feels at certainty of having passed an imminent danger. Christine herself seemed relieved, though her inexperience in a great degree prevented her from foreseeing all that the greater practice of Sigismund had led him to anticipate.

"This it quite in rule, and naught now remains but to receive the signatures of the respective parties and their friends," resumed the baliff. "A happy *ménage* is like a well-ordered state, a foretaste of the joys and peace of heaven; while a discontented household and a turbulent community may be likened at once to the penalties and the pains of hell! Let the friends of the parties step forth in readiness to sign when the principals themselves shall have discharged this duty."

A few of the relatives and associates of Jacques Colis moved out of the crowd and placed themselves at the side of the bridegroom, who immediately wrote his own name, like a man impatient to be happy. A pause succeeded, for all were curious to see who claimed affinity to the trembling girl, on this the most solemn and important event of her life. An interval of several minutes elapsed, and no one appeared. The respiration of Sigismund became more difficult; he seemed about to choke, and then yielding to a generous impulse, he arose.

"For the love of God!—for thine own sake!—for mine! be not too hasty!" whis pered the terrified Adelheid; for she saw the hot glow that almost blazed on his brow.

"I cannot desert poor Christine to the scorn of the world, in a moment like this! If I die of shame, I must go forward and own myself!"

The hand of Mademoiselle de Willading was laid upon his arm, and he yielded to this silent but impressive entreaty, for just then he saw that his sister was about to be relieved from her distressing solitude. The throng yielded, and a decent pair, attired in the guise of small but comfortable proprietors, moved doubtingly toward the bride. The eyes of Christine filled with tears, for terror and the apprehension of disgrace yielded suddenly to joy. Those who advanced to support her in that moment of intense trial were her father and mother. The respectable-looking pair moved slowly to the side of their daughter, and having placed themselves one on each side of her, they first ventured to cast furtive and subdued glances at the multitude.

"It is doubtless painful to the parents to part with so fair and so dutiful a child," resumed the obtuse Peterchen, who rarely saw in any emotion more than its most commonplace and vulgar character. "Nature pulls them one way, while the terms of the contract and the progress of our ceremonies pull another. I have often weaknesses of this sort myself, the most sensitive hearts being the most liable to these attacks. But my children are the public, and do not admit of too much of what I may call the detail of sentiment, else, by the soul of Calvin! were I but an indifferent bailiff for Berne! Thou art the father of this fair and blushing maiden, and thou her mother?"

"We are these," returned Balthazar, mildly.

"Thou art not of Vévey, or its neighborhood, by thy speech?"

"Of the great canton, mein Herr," for the answer was in German, these contracted districts possessing nearly as many dialects as

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there are territorial divisions. "We are strangers in Vaud."

"Thou hast not done the worse for marrying thy daughter with a Vévaisan, and more especially, under the favor of our renowned and liberal abbaye. I warrant me thy child will be none the poorer for this compliance with the wishes of those who lead our ceremonies!"

"She will not go portionless to the house of her husband," returned the father, coloring with secret pride; for to one to whom the chances of life left so few sources of satisfaction, those that were possessed became doubly dear.

"This is well! A right worthy couple! And, I doubt not, a meet companion will your offspring prove. Monsieur le Notair, call off the names of these good people aloud, that they may sign, at least, with a decent parade."

"It is settled otherwise," hastily answered the functionary of the quill, who was necessarily in the secret of Christine's origin, and who had been well bribed to observe discretion. "It would altogether derange the order and regularity of the proceedings."

"As thou wilt; for I would have nothing illegal, and least of all, nothing disorderly. But, o' Heaven's sake! let us get through with our penmanship, for I hear there are symptoms that the meats are likely to be overbaked. Canst thou write, good man?"

"Indifferently, mein Herr; but in a way to make what I will binding before the law."

"Give the quill to the bride, Mr. Notary, and let us protract the happy event no longer."

The bailiff here bent his head aside and whispered to an attendant to hurry toward the kitchens and to look to the affairs of the banquet. Christine took the pen with a trembling hand and pallid cheek, and was about to apply it to the paper, when a sudden cry from the throng diverted the attention of all present to a new matter of interest.

"Who dares thus indecently interrupt this grave scene, and that, too, in so great a presence?" sternly demanded the bailiff.

Pippo, who with the other prisoners, had unavoidably been inclosed in the space near the estrade by the pressure of the multitude, staggered more into view, and moving his cap with a well-managed respect, presented himself humbly to the sight of Peterchen.

"It is I, illustrious and excellent governor," returned the wily Neapolitan, who retained just enough of the liquor he had swallowed to render him audacious, without weakening his means of observation. "It is I, Pippo; an artist of humble pretensions, but I hope, a very honest man, and as I know, a great reverencer of the laws and a true friend to order."

"Let the good man speak up boldly. A man of these principles has a right to be heard. We live in a time of damnable innovations, and of most atrocious attempts to overturn the altar, the State, and the public trusts, and the sentiments of such a man are like dew to the parched grass."

The reader is not to imagine, from the language of the bailiff, that Vaud stood on the eve of any great political commotion, but as the government was in itself an usurpation, and founded on the false principle of exclusion, it was quite as usual then, as now, to cry out against the moral throes of violated right, since the same eagerness to possess, the same selfishness in grasping, however unjustly obtained, and the same audacity of assertion with a view to mystify, pervaded the Christian world a century since as exist to-day. The cunning Pippo saw that the bait had taken, and assuming a still more respectful and loyal mien, he continued:—

"Although a stranger, illustrious governor, I have had great delight in these joyous and excellent ceremonies. Their fame will be spread far and near, and men will talk of little else for the coming year but of Vévey and its festival. But a great scandal hangs over your honorable heads which it is in my power to turn aside, and San Gennaro forbid that I, a stranger, that hath been well entertained in your town, should hesitate about raising his voice on account of any scruples of modesty! No doubt, great governor, your Eccellenza believes that this worthy Vévaisan is about to wive a creditable maiden, whose name could be honorably mentioned with those of the ceremonies and your town, before the proudest company in Europe?"

"What of this, fellow? The girl is fair, and modest enough, at least to the eye, and if thou knowest aught else, whisper thy secret

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to her husband or her friends, but do not come in this rude manner to disturb our harmony with thy raven throat, just as we are ready to sing an epithalamium in honor of the happy pair. Your excessive particularity is the curse of wedlock, my friends, and I have a great mind to send this knave, in spite of all his profession of order, which is like enough to produce disorder, for a month or two into our Vévey dungeon for his pains."

Pippo was staggered, for, just drunk enough to be audacious, he had not all his faculties at his perfect command, and his usual acumen was a little at fault. Still, accustomed to brave public opinion, and to carry himself through the failures of his exhibitions of heavier drafts on the patience and credulity of his audience, he determined to persevere as the most likely way of extricating himself from the menaced consequences of his indiscretion.

"A thousand pardons, great bailiff," he answered. "Naught but a burning desire to do justice to your high honor, and to the reputation of the abbaye's festival, could have led me so far, but——"

"Speak thy mind at once, rogue, and have done with circumlocution."

"I have little to say, signor, except that the father of this illustrious bride, who is about to honor Vévey by making her nuptials an occasion for all in the city to witness and to favor, is the common headsman of Berne —a wretch who lately came near to prove the destruction of more Christians than the law has condemned, and who is sufficiently out of favor with Heaven to bring the fate of Gomorrah upon your town!"

Pippo tottered to his station among the prisoners, with the manner of one who had delivered himself of an important trust, and was instantly lost to view. So rapid and unlooked-for had been the interruption, and so vehement the utterance of the Italian while delivering his facts, that, though several present saw their tendency when it was too late, none had sufficient presence of mind to prevent the exposure. A murmur arose in the crowd, which stirred like a vast sheet of fluid on which a passing gust had alighted, and then became fixed and calm. Of all present, the bailiff manifested the least surprise or concern, for to him the last minister of the law was an object, if not precisely of respect, of politic good-will rather than of dishonor.

"What of this!" he answered, in the way of one who had expected a far more important revelation. "What of this, should it be true? Harkee, friend—art thou, in sooth, the noted Balthazar, he to whose family the canton is indebted for so much fair justice?"

Balthazar saw that his secret was betrayed, and that it were wiser simply to admit the facts, than to have recourse to subterfuge or denial. Nature, moreover, had made him a man with strong and pure propensities for the truth, and he was never without the innate consciousness of the injustice of which he had been made the victim by the unfeeling ordinance of society. Raising his head, he looked around him with firmness, for he too, unhappily, had been accustomed to act in the face of multitudes, and he answered the question of the bailiff, in his usual mild tone of voice, but with composure.

"Herr Bailiff, I am by inheritance the last avenger of the law."

"By my office! I like the title; it is a good one! The last avenger of the law! If rogues will offend, or dissatisfied spirits plot, there must be a hand to put the finishing blow to their evil works, and why not thou as well as another! Harkee, officers, shut me up yonder Italian knave for a week on bread and water, for daring to trifle with the time and good nature of the public in this impudent manner. And this worthy dame is thy wife, honest Balthazar; and that fair maiden thy child? Hast thou more of so goodly a race?"

"God has blessed me in my offspring, mein Herr."

"Aye; God hath blessed thee! and a great blessing it should be, as I know by bitter experience—that is, being a bachelor, I understand the misery of being childless—I would say no more. Sign the contract, honest Balthazar, with thy wife and daughter, that we may have an end of this."

The family of the proscribed were about to obey this mandate, when Jacques Colis abruptly threw down the emblems of a bridegroom, tore the contract in fragments, and publicly announced that he had changed his intention, and that he would not wive a headsman's child. The public mind is

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usually caught by any loud declaration in favor of the ruling prejudice, and after the first brief pause of surprise was past, the determination of the groom was received with a shout of applause that was immediately followed by general, coarse, and deriding laughter. The throng pressed upon the keepers of the limits in a still denser mass, opposing an impenetrable wall of human bodies to the passage of any in either direction, and a dead stillness succeeded, as if all present breathlessly awaited the result of the singular scene.

So unexpected and sudden was the purpose of the groom, that they who were most affected by it, did not, at first, fully comprehend the extent of the disgrace that was so publicly heaped upon them. The innocent and unpractised Christine stood resembling the cold statue of a vestal, with the pen raised ready to affix her as yet untarnished name to the contract, in an attitude of suspense, while her wondering look followed the agitation of the multitude, as the startled bird, before it takes wing, regards a movement among the leaves of the bush. But there was no escape from the truth. Conviction of its humiliating nature came too soon, and by the time the calm of intense curiosity had succeeded to the momentary excitement of the spectators, she was standing an exquisite, but painful, picture of wounded feminine feeling and of maiden shame. Her parents, too, were stupified by the suddenness of the unexpected shock, and it was longer before their faculties recovered the tone proper to meet an insult so unprovoked and gross.

"This is unusual," dryly remarked the bailiff, who was the first to break the long and painful silence.

"It is brutal!" warmly interposed the Signor Grimaldi. "Unless there has been deception practised on the bridegroom, it is utterly without excuse."

"Your experience, signor, has readily suggested the true points in a very knotty case, and I shall proceed without delay to look into its merits."

Sigismund resumed his seat, his hand releasing the sword-hilt that it had spontaneously grasped when he heard this declaration of the bailiff's intentions.

"For the sake of thy poor sister, forbear!" whispered the terrified Adelheid. "All will yet be well—all must be well—it is impossible that one so sweet and innocent should long remain with her honor unavenged!"

The young man smiled frightfully, at least so it seemed to his companion: but he maintained the appearance of composure. In the meantime Peterchen, having secretly dispatched another messenger to the cooks, turned his serious attention to the difficulty that had just arisen.

"I have long been intrusted by the council with honorable duties," he said, "but never, before to-day, have I been required to decide upon a domestic misunderstanding, before the parties were actually wedded. This is a grave interruption of the ceremonies of the abbaye, as well as a slight upon the notary and the spectators, and needs be well looked to. Dost thou really persist in putting this unusual termination to the marriage ceremony, Herr Bridegroom?"

Jacques Colis had lost a little of the violent impulse which led him to the precipitate and inconsiderate act of destroying an instrument he had legally executed; but this outbreaking of feeling was followed by a sullen and fixed resolution to persevere in the refusal at every hazard to himself.

"I will not wive the daughter of a man hunted of society, and avoided by all," he doggedly answered.

"No doubt the respectability of the parent is the next thing to a good dowry, in the choice of a wife," returned the bailiff, "but one of thy years has not come hither, without having first inquired into the parentage of her thou wert about to wed?"

"It was sworn to me that the secret should be kept. The girl is well endowed, and a promise was solemnly made that her parentage should never be known. The family of Colis is esteemed in Vaud, and I would not have it said that the blood of the headsman of the canton hath mixed in a stream as fair as ours."

"And yet thou wert not unwilling, so long as the circumstance was unknown? Thy objection is less to the fact, than to its public exposure."

"Without the aid of parchments and tongues, Monsieur le Bailli, we should all be

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equal in birth. Ask the noble Baron de Willading, who is seated there at your side, why he is better than another. He will tell you that he is come of an ancient and honorable line; but had he been taken from his castle in infancy, and concealed under a feigned name, and kept from men's knowledge as being that he is, who would think of him for the deeds of his ancestors? As the Sire de Willading would, in such a case, have lost in the world's esteem, so did Christine gain; but as opinion would return to the Baron, when the truth should be published, so does it desert Balthazar's daughter, when she is known to be a headsman's child. I would have married the maiden as she was, but, your pardon, Monsieur le Bailli, if I say, I will not wive her as she is."

A murmur of approbation followed this plausible and ready apology, for, when antipathies are active and bitter, men are easily satisfied with a doubtful morality and a weak argument.

"This honest youth hath some reason in him," observed the puzzled bailiff, shaking his head. "I would he had been less expert in disputation, or that the secret had been better kept! It is apparent as the sun in the heavens, friend Melchior, that hadst thou not been known as thy father's child, thou wouldst not have succeeded to thy castle and lands—nay, by St. Luke! not even to the rights of the bürgerschaft."

"In Genoa we are used to hear both parties," gravely rejoined the Signor Grimaldi, "that we may first make sure that we touch the true merits of the case. Were another to claim the Signor de Willading's honors and name, thou wouldst scarce grant his suit, without questioning our friend here, touching his own rights to the same."

"Better and better! This is justice, while that which fell from the bridegroom was only argument. Harkee, Balthazar, and thou good woman, his wife—and thou too, pretty Christine—what have ye all to answer to the reasonable plea of Jacques Colis?"

Balthazar, who, by the nature of his office, and by his general masculine duties, had been so much accustomed to meet with harsh instances of the public hatred, soon recovered his usual calm exterior, even though he felt a father's pang and a father's just resentment at witnessing this open injury to one so gentle and deserving as his child. But the blow had been far heavier on Marguerite, the faithful and long-continued sharer of his fortunes. The wife of Balthazar was past the prime of her days, but she still retained the presence, and some of the personal beauty, which had rendered her, in youth, a woman of extraordinary mien and carriage. When the words which announced the slight to her daughter first fell on her ears, she paled to the hue of the dead. For several minutes she stood looking more like one that had taken a final departure from the interests and emotions of life, than one that, in truth, was a prey to one of the strongest passions the human breast can ever entertain, that of wounded maternal affection. Then the blood stole slowly to her temples, and, by the time the bailiff put his question, her entire face was glowing under a tumult of feeling that threatened to defeat its own wishes, by depriving her of the power of speech.

"Thou canst answer him, Balthazar," she said huskily, motioning for her husband to arouse his faculties; "thou art used to these multitudes and to their scorn. Thou art a man, and canst do us justice."

"Herr Bailiff," said the headsman, who seldom lost the mild deportment that characterized his manner, "there is much truth in what Jacques hath urged, but all present may have seen that the fault did not come of us, but of yonder heartless vagabond. The wretch sought my life on the lake, in our late unfortunate passage hither; and, not content with wishing to rob my children of their father, he comes now to injure me still more cruelly. I was born to the office I hold, as you well know, Herr Hofmeister, or it would never have been sought by me; but what the law wills, men insist upon as right. This girl can never be called upon to strike a head from its shoulders, and, knowing from childhood up the scorn that awaits all who come of my race, I sought the means of releasing her, at least, from some part of the curse that hath descended on us."

"I know not if this were legal!" interrupted the bailiff, quickly. "What is your opinion, Herr von Willading? Can any in Berne escape their heritable duties, any more than hereditary privileges can be assumed?

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This is a grave question; innovation leads to innovation, and our venerable laws and our sacred usages must be preserved, if we would avert the curse of change!"

"Balthazar hath well observed that a female cannot exercise the executioner's office."

"True, but a female may bring forth them that can. This is a cunning question for the doctors-in-law, and it must be examined; of all damnable offences, Heaven keep me from that of a wish for change. If change is ever to follow, why establish? Change is the unpardonable sin in politics, Signor Grimaldi; since that which is often changed becomes valueless in time, even if it be coin."

"The mother hath something she would utter," said the Genoese, whose quick, but observant eye had been watching the workings of the countenances of the repudiated family, while the bailiff was digressing in his usual prolix manner on things in general, and who detected the throes of feeling which heaved the bosom of the respectable Marguerite, in a way to announce a speedy birth to her thoughts.

"Hast thou aught to urge, good woman?" demanded Peterchen, who was well enough disposed to hear both sides in all cases of controversy, unless they happened to touch the supremacy of the great canton. "To speak the truth, the reasons of Jacques Colis are plausible and witty, and are likely to weigh heavy against thee."

The color slowly disappeared from the brow of the mother, and she turned such a look of fondness and protection on her child, as spoke a complete condensation of all her feeling in the engrossing sentiment of a mother's love.

"Have I aught to urge!" slowly repeated Marguerite, looking steadily about her at the curious and unfeeling crowd, which, bent on the indulgence of its appetite for novelty, and excited by its prejudices, still pressed upon the halberds of the officers—"Has a mother aught to say in defence of her injured and insulted child! What hast thou not also asked, Herr Hofmeister, if I am human? We come of proscribed races, I know, Balthazar and I, but like thee, proud bailiff, and the privileged at thy side, we come too of God! The judgment and power of men have crushed us from the beginning, and we are used to the world's scorn and to the world's injustice!"

"Say not so, good woman, for no more is required than the law sanctions. Thou art now talking against thine own interests, and I interrupt thee in pure mercy. 'Twould be scandalous in me to sit here and listen to one that hath bespattered the law with an evil tongue."

"I know naught of the subtleties of thy laws, but well do I know their cruelty and wrongs, as respects me and mine! All others come into the world with hope, but we have been crushed from the beginning. That surely cannot be just which destroys hope. Even the sinner need not despair, through the mercy of the Son of God! but we, that have come into the world under thy laws, have little before us in life but shame and the scorn of men!"

"Nay, thou quite mistakest the matter, dame; these privileges were first bestowed on thy families in reward for good services, I make no doubt, and it was long accounted profitable to be of this office."

"I do not say that in a darker age, when oppression stalked over the land, and the best were barbarous as the worst to-day, some of those of whom we are born may not have been fierce and cruel enough to take upon themselves this office with good will; but I deny that any short of Him who holds the universe in his hand, and who controls an endless future to compensate for the evils of the present time, has the power to say to the son, that he shall be the heritor of the father's wrongs!"

"How! dost question the doctrine of descents? We shall next hear thee dispute the rights of the bürgerschaft!"

"I know nothing, Herr Bailiff, of the nice distinctions of your rights in the city, and wish to utter naught for or against. But an entire life of contumely and bitterness is apt to become a life of thoughtfulness and care; and I see sufficient difference between the preservation of privileges fairly earned, though even these may and do bring with them abuses hard to be borne, and the unmerited oppression of the offspring for the ancestor's faults. There is little of that justice which savors of Heaven in this, and the

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time will come when a fearful return will be made for wrongs so sore!"

"Concern for thy pretty daughter, good Marguerite, causes thee to speak strongly."

"Is not the daughter of a headsman and a headman's wife their offspring, as much as the fair maiden who sits near thee is the child of the noble at her side? Am I to love her less, that she is despised by a cruel world? Had I not the same suffering at the birth, the same joy in the infant smile, the same hope in the childish promise, and the same trembling for her fate when I consented to trust her happiness to another, as she that bore that more fortunate but not fairer maiden hath had in her? Hath God created two natures—two yearnings for the mother—two longings for our children's weal—those of the rich and honored, and those of the crushed and despised?"

"Go to, good Marguerite; thou puttest the matter altogether in a manner that is unusual. Are our reverenced usages nothing—our solemn edicts—our city's rule—and our resolution to govern, and that fairly and with effect?"

"I fear that these are stronger than the right, and likely to endure when the tears of the oppressed are exhausted, when they and their fates shall be forgotten!"

"Thy child is fair and modest," observed the Signor Grimaldi, "and will yet find a youth who will more than atone for this injury. He that has rejected her was not worthy of her faith."

Marguerite turned her look, which had been glowing with awakened feeling, on her pale and still motionless daughter. The expression of her eyes softened, and she folded her child to her bosom, as the dove shelters its young. All her aroused feelings appeared to dissolve in the sentiment of love.

"My child is fair, Herr Peter," she continued, without adverting to the interruption; "but better than fair, she is good! Christine is gentle and dutiful, and not for a world would she bruise the spirit of another as hers has been this day bruised. Humbled as we are, and despised of men, bailiff, we have our thoughts, and our wishes, and our hopes, and memory, and all the other feelings of those that are more fortunate; and when I have rocked my brain to reason on the justice of a fate which has condemned all of my race to have little other communion with their kind but that of blood, and when bitterness has swollen at my heart, aye, near to bursting, and I have been ready to curse Providence and die, this mild, affectionate girl hath been near to quench the fire that consumed me, and to tighten the chords of life until the love and innocence have left me willing to live even under a heavier load than this I bear. Thou art of an honored race, bailiff, and canst little understand most of our suffering; but thou art a man, and shouldst know what it is to be wounded through another, and that one who is dearer to thee than thine own flesh."

"Thy words are strong, good Marguerite," again interrupted the bailiff, who felt an uneasiness of which he would very gladly be rid. "Himmel! Who can like anything better than his own flesh? Besides, thou shouldst remember that I am a bachelor, and bachelors are apt naturally, to feel more for their own flesh than for that of others. Stand aside and let the procession pass, that we may go to the banquet, which waits. If Jacques Colis will none of thy girl, I have not the power to make him. Double the dowry, good woman, and thou shalt have a choice of husbands, in spite of the axe and the sword that are in thy escutcheon. Let the halberdiers make way for those honest people there, who, at least, are functionaries of the law, and are to be protected as well as ourselves."

The crowd obeyed, yielding readily to the advance of the officers, and, in a few minutes, the useless attendants of the village nuptials, and the train of Hymen, slunk away, sensible of the ridicule that, in a double degree, attaches itself to folly, when it fails of affecting even its own absurdities.

CHAPTER XIX.

"The weeping blood in woman's breast
Was never known to thee;
Nor the balm that drops on wounds of woe
From woman's pitying e'e."—BURNS.

A LARGE portion of the curious followed the disconcerted mummers from the square, while others hastened to break their fasts

at the several places selected for this important feature in the business of the day. Most of those who had been on the estrade now left it, and, in a few minutes, the living carpet of heads around the little area in front of the bailiff was reduced to a few hundreds of those whose better feelings were stronger than their self-indulgence. Perhaps this distribution of the multitude is about in the proportion that is nsually found in those cases in which selfishness draws in one direction, while feeling or sympathy with the wronged pulls in another, among all masses of human beings that are congregated as spectators of some general and indifferent exhibition of interests in which they have no near personal concern.

The bailiff and his immediate friends, the prisoners, and the family of the headsman, with a sufficient number of the guards, were among those who remained. The bustling Peterchen had lost some of his desire to take his place at the banquet, in the difficulties of the question which had arisen, and in the certainty that nothing material, in the way of gastronomy, would be attempted until he appeared. We would do injustice to his heart, did we not add, also, that he had troublesome qualms of conscience, which intuitively admonished him that the world had dealt hardly with the family of Balthazar. There remained the party of Maso, too, to dispose of, and his character of an upright as well as of a firm magistrate to maintain. As the crowd diminished, however, he and those near him, descended from their high places, and mixed with the few who occupied the still guarded area in front of the stage.

Balthazar had not stirred from his riveted posture near the table of the notary, for he shrank from encountering, in the company of his wife and daughter, the insults to which he should be exposed now his character was known, by mingling with the crowd, and he waited for a favorable moment to withdraw unseen. Marguerite still stood folding Christine to her bosom, as if jealous of further injury to her beloved. The recreant bridegroom had taken the earliest opportunity to disappear, and was seen no more in Vévey during the remainder of the revels.

Peterchen cast a hurried glance at this group, as his foot reached the ground, and then turning toward the thief-takers, he made a sign for them to advance with their prisoners.

"Thy evil tongue has balked one of the most engaging rites of the day's festival, knave," observed the bailiff, addressing Pippo with a certain magisterial reproof in his voice. "I should do well to send thee to Berne, to serve a month among those who sweep the city streets, as a punishment for thy raven throat. What, in the name of all thy Roman saints and idols, hadst thou against the happiness of these honest people, that thou must come, in this unseemly manner, to destroy it?"

"Naught but love of truth, Eccellenza, and a just horror of the man of blood."

"That thou and all like thee should have a horror of the ministers of the law, I can understand; and it is more than probable that thy dislike will extend to me, for I am about to pronounce a just judgment on thee and thy fellows for disturbing the harmony of the day, and especially for having been guilty of the enormous crime of an outrage on our agents."

"Couldst thou grant me a moment's leave?" asked the Genoese in his ear.

"An hour, noble Gaeteno, if thou wilt."

The two then conversed apart for a minute or more. During the brief dialogue, the Signor Grimaldi occasionally looked at the quiet and apparently contrite Maso, and stretched his arms toward the Leman, in a way to give the observers an inkling of his subject. The countenance of the Herr Hofmeister changed from official sternness to an expression of decent concern as he listened, and ere long it took a decidedly forgiving laxity of muscle. When the other had done speaking, he bowed a ready assent to what he had just heard, and returned to the prisoners.

"As I have just observed," he resumed, "it is my duty now to pronounce finally on these men and their conduct. Firstly, they are strangers, and as such are not only ignorant of our laws, but entitled to our hospitality; next, they have been punished sufficiently for the original offence, by being abridged of the day's sports; and as to the

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crime committed against ourselves, in the person of our agents, it is freely forgiven, for forgiveness is a generous quality, and becomes a paternal form of rule. Depart therefore, of God's name! all of ye to a man, and remember henceforth to be discreet. Signor, and you, Herr Baron, shall we to the banquet?"

The two old friends had already moved onward, in close and earnest discourse, and the bailiff was obliged to seek out another companion. None offered at the moment, but Sigismund, who had stood, since quitting the stage, in an attitude of complete indecision and helplessness, notwithstanding his great physical energy and his usual moral readiness to act. Taking the arm of the young soldier, with the disregard of ceremony that denotes a sense of condescension, the bailiff drew him away from the spot, heedless himself of the other's reluctance, and without observing that, in consequence of the general desertion, for few were disposed to indulge their compassion unless it were in company with the honored and noble, Adelheid was left absolutely alone with the family of Balthazar.

"This office of a headsman, Herr Sigismund," commenced the unobservant Peterchen, too full of his own opinions, and much too sensible of his right to be delivered of them in the presence of his junior and inferior, to note the youth's trouble, "is at the best but a disgusting affair; though we, of station and authority, are obliged prudently to appear to deem it otherwise before the people, in our own interest. Thou hast had occasion to remark often, in the discipline of thy military followers, that a false coloring must be put upon things, lest they who are very necessary to the state should not think the state quite so necessary to them. What is thy opinion, Captain Sigismund, as a man who has yet his hopes and his views of the softer sex, of this act of Jacques Colis? Is it conduct to be approved of, or to be condemned?"

"I deem him a heartless, mercenary miscreant!"

The suppressed energy with which these unexpected words were uttered caused the bailiff to stop and to look up in his companion's face, as if to ask its reason. But there all was already calm, for the young man had too long been accustomed to drill its expression, when the sensitive sore of his origin was probed, as so frequently happened, to permit the momentary weakness long to maintain its ascendency.

"Aye, this is the opinion of thy years," resumed Peterchen. "Thou art at a time of life when we esteem a pretty face and a mellow eye of more account even than gold. But we put on our interested spectacles after thirty, and seldom see anything very admirable, that is not at the same time very lucrative. Here is Melchior de Willading's daughter, now, a woman to set a city in a blaze, for she hath wit, and lands, and beauty, besides good blood;—what, for instance, is thy opinion of her merit?"

"That she is deserving of all the happiness that every human excellence ought to confer!"

"Hum—thou art nearer to thirty than I had thought thee, Herr Sigismund! But touching this Balthazar, thou art not to believe, on account of the few words of grace which fell from me, that my aversion for the wretch is less than thine, or than that of any other honest man; but it would be unseemly and unwise in a bailiff to desert the last minister of the law's decrees in the face of the public. There are feelings and sentiments that are natural to us all, and among them are to be classed respect and honor for the well and nobly born" (the discourse was in German), "and hatred and contempt for those who are condemned of men. These are feelings which belong to human nature itself, and God forbid that I, a man already past the age of romance, should really entertain any sentiments that are not strictly human."

"Do they not rather belong to abuses—to our prejudices?"

"The difference is not material, in a practical view, young man. That which is fairly bred into the mind, by discipline and habit, gets to be stronger than instinct, or even than one of the senses. Let there be an unseemly sight, or a foul smell near thee, and thou hast only to turn thy eyes, or hold thy nose, to be rid of it; but I could never find the means to lessen a prejudice that was once fairly seated in the mind. Thou mayest look whither thou wilt, and shut out the unsavory odors of the imagination by all the

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means thou canst invent, but if a man is, in truth, condemned of opinion, he might as well make his appeal to God at once for justice, as to any mercy he is likely to receive from men. This much have I learned in my experience as a public functionary."

"I should hope that these are not the legal dogmas of our ancient canton," returned the youth, conquering his feelings, though it cost him a severe effort.

"As far from it as Basle is from Coire. We hold no such discreditable doctrines. I challenge the world to show a state that possesses a fairer set of maxims than ourselves, and we even endeavor to make our practice chime in with our opinions, whenever it can be done in safety. No, in these particulars, Berne is a paragon of a community, and as rarely says one thing and does another, as any government you shall see. What I now tell thee, young man, is said to thee in the familiarity of a fête, as thou know'st, in which there have been some fooleries, to open confidence and to loosen the tongue. We openly and loudly profess great truth and equality before the law, saving the city's rights, and to take holy, heavenly, upright justice for our guide in all matters of theory. Himmel! If thou wouldst have thy affair decided on principle, go before the councils, or the magistracy of the canton, and thou shalt hear such wisdom, and witness such keen-sightedness into chicanery, as would have honored Solomon himself!"

"And notwithstanding this, prejudice is a general master."

"How canst thou have it otherwise? Is not a man a man? Will he not lean as he has been weighed upon?—does not the tree grow in the way the twig is bent? No, while I adore justice, Herr Sigismund, as becomes a bailiff, I confess to both prejudice and partiality, mentally considered. Now, yonder maiden, the pretty Christine, lost some of her grace in my eyes, as no doubt she did in thine, when the truth came to be known that she was Balthazar's child. The girl is fair and modest and winning in her way; but there is something—I cannot tell thee what—but a certain damnable something—a taint—a color—a hue—a—a—a—that showed her origin the instant I heard who was her parent—was it not so with thee?"

"When her origin was proved, but not previously."

"Aye, of a certainty; I mean not otherwise. But a thing is not seen any the worse because it is seen thoroughly, although it may be seen falsely when there are false covers to conceal its ugliness. Particularity is necessary to philosophy. Ignorance is a mask to conceal the little details that are necessary to knowledge. Your Moor might pass for a Christian in a mask, but strip him of his covering and the true shade of the skin is seen. Didst thou not observe, for instance, in all that touches feminine grace and perfection, the manifest difference between the daughter of Melchior de Willading and the daughter of this Balthazar?"

"There was the difference between a maiden of most honored and happy extraction and a maiden most miserably condemned!"

"Nay, the Demoiselle de Willading is the fairer."

"Nature has certainly been most bountiful to the heiress of Willading, Herr Bailiff, who is scarcely less attractive for her female grace and goodness, than she is fortunate in the accidents of birth and condition."

"I knew thou couldst not, in secret, be of a different mind from the rest of men!" exclaimed Peterchen in triumph, for he took the warmth of his companion's manner to be a reluctant and half-concealed assent to his own proposition. Here the discourse ended; for, the earnest conference between Melchior and the Signor Grimaldi having terminated, the bailiff hastened to join his more important guests, and Sigismund was released from an examination that had harrowed every feeling of his soul, while he even despised the besotted loquacity of the man who had been the instrument of his torture.

The separation of Adelheid from her father was anticipated and previously provided for; since the men were expected to resort to the banquet at this hour. She had continued near Christine and her mother, therefore, without attracting any unusual attention to her movements, even in those who were the objects of her sympathy, a feeling that was so natural in one of her years and sex. A male attendant, in the livery of her father's house, remained near her person, a protector who was certain to insure not only her safety in

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the thronged streets of the town, but to exact from those whose faculties were beginning to yield to the excesses of the occasion the testimonials of respect that were due to her station. It was under these circumstances, then, that the more honored, and, to the eyes of the uninstructed, the happier of these maidens, approached the other, when curiosity was so far appeased as to have left the family of Balthazar nearly alone in the centre of the square.

"Is there no friendly roof near, to which thou canst withdraw?" asked the heiress of Willading of the mother of the pallid and scarcely conscious Christine; "thou wouldst do better to seek some shelter and privacy for thy unoffending and much injured child. If any that belong to me can be of service, I pray that thou wilt command as freely as if they were followers of thine own."

Marguerite had never before spoken with a female of a rank superior to the ordinary classes. The ample means of both her father's and her husband's family, had furnished all that was necessary to the improvement of the mind of one in her station, and perhaps she had been the gainer, in mere deportment, by having been greatly excluded, by their prejudices, from association with females of her own condition. As is often seen among those who have the thoughts without the conventional usages of a better caste in life, she was slightly tinctured with an exhibition of what might be termed an exaggerated manner, while at the same time it was perfectly free from vulgarity or coarseness. The gentle accents of Adelheid fell on her ear soothingly, and she gazed long and earnestly at the beautiful speaker without a reply.

"Who and what art thou that canst think a headsman's child may receive an insult that is unmerited, and who offerest the service of thy menials, as if the very vassal would not refuse his master's bidding in our behalf?"

"I am Adelheid de Willading, the daughter of the Baron of that name, and one much disposed to temper this cruel blow to the feelings of poor Christine. Suffer that my people seek the means to convey thy child to some other place!"

Marguerite folded her daughter still closer to her bosom, passing a hand across her brow, as if to recall some half-obscured idea.

"I have heard of thee, lady. 'Tis said that thou art kind to the wronged, and of excellent dispositions toward the unhappy—that thy father's castle is an honored and hospitable abode, which those who enter rarely love to quit. But hast thou well weighed the consequences of this liberality toward a race that is and has been proscribed of men, from generation to generation—from him who first lent himself to his bloody office with a cruel heart and a greedy desire for gold, to him whose courage is scarcely equal to the disgusting duty? Hast thou bethought thee of this, or hast thou yielded, heedlessly, to a sudden and youthful impulse?"

"Of all this have I thought," said Adelheid, eagerly; "whatever may be the injustice of others, thou hast none to fear from me."

Marguerite yielded the form of her child to the support of her father's arm, and drew nearer, with a gaze of earnest and pleased interest, to the blushing but still composed Adelheid. She took the hand of the latter, and, with a look of recognition and intelligence, said slowly, as if communing with herself, rather than speaking to another—

"This is getting to be intelligible!" she murmured; "there is still gratitude and creditable feeling in the world. I can understand why we are not revolting to this fair being, she has a sense of justice that is stronger than her prejudices. We have done her service, and she is not ashamed of the source whence it has come!"

The heart of Adelheid throbbed quick and violently; and, for a moment, she doubted her ability to command her feelings. But the pleasing conviction that Sigismund had been honorable and delicate, even to his most sacred and confidential communications with his own mother, came to relieve her, and to make her momentarily happy; since nothing is so painful to the pure mind as to think those they love have acted unworthily; or nothing so grateful, as the assurance that they merit the esteem we have been induced liberally and confidingly to bestow.

"You do me no more than justice," returned the pleased listener of this flattering

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and seemingly involuntary opinion—"we are indeed—indeed, we are truly grateful; but had we not reason for the sacred obligations of gratitude, I think we could still be just. Will you not now consent that my people should aid you?"

"This is not necessary, lady. Send away thy followers, for their presence will draw unpleasant observations on our movements. The town is now occupied with feasts, and, as we have not blindly overlooked the necessity of a retreat for the hunted and persecuted, we will take the opportunity to withdraw unseen. As for thyself——"

"I would be near this innocent at a moment so trying," added Adelheid, earnestly, and with that visible sympathy which rarely fails to meet an echo.

"Heaven bless thee! Heaven bless thee, sweet girl! And Heaven will bless thee, for few wrongs go unrequited in this life, and little good without its reward. Send thy followers away, or if thy habits require their watchfulness, let them be near unseen, whilst thou watchest our movements; and when the eyes of all are turned on their own pleasures, thou canst follow. Heaven bless thee—aye, and Heaven will!"

Marguerite then led her daughter toward one of the least frequented streets. She was accompanied by the silent Balthazar, and closely watched by one of the menials of Adelheid. When fairly housed, the domestic returned to show the spot to his mistress, who had appeared to occupy herself with the hundred silly devices that were invented to amuse the multitude. Dismissing her attendants, with an order to remain at hand, however, the heiress of Willading soon found means to enter the humble abode in which the proscribed family had taken refuge, and, as she was expected, she was soon introduced into the chamber where Christine and her mother had taken refuge.

The sympathy of the young and tender Adelheid was precious to one of the character of Christine. They wept together, for the weakness of her sex prevailed over the pride of the former, when she found herself unrestrained by the observation of the world, and she gave way to the torrent of feeling that broke through its bounds, in spite of her endeavors to control it. Marguerite was the only spectator of this silent but intelligible communion between these two young and pure spirits, and her soul was shaken by the unlooked-for commiseration of one so honored and who was usually esteemed so happy.

"Thou hast the consciousness of our wrongs," she said, when the first burst of emotion had a little subsided. "Thou canst then believe that a headsman's child is like the offspring of another, and is not to be hunted of men like the young of a wolf."

"Mother, this is the Baron de Willading's heiress," said Christine; "would she come here, did she not pity us?"

"Yes, she can pity us—and yet I find it hard even to be pitied! Sigismund has told us of her goodness, and she may, in truth, feel for the wretched!"

The allusion to her son caused the temples of Adelheid to burn like fire, while there was a chill, resembling that of death, at her heart. The first arose from the quick and uncontrollable alarm of female sensitiveness; the last was owing to the shock inseparable from being presented with this vivid, palpable picture of Sigismund's close affinity with the family of an executioner. She could have better borne it, had Marguerite spoken of her son less familiarly, or with more of that feigned ignorance of each other, which, without stopping to scan its fitness, she had been led to think existed between the young man and his family.

"Mother!" exclaimed Christine reproachfully, and in surprise, as if a great indiscretion had been thoughtlessly committed.

"It matters not, child; it matters not. I saw by the kindling eye of Sigismund to-day, that our secret will not much longer be kept. The noble boy must show more energy than those who have gone before him; he must quit forever a country in which he was condemned, even before he was born."

"I shall not deny that your connection with Monsieur Sigismund is known to me," said Adelheid, summoning all her resolution to make an avowal which put her at once into the confidence of Balthazar's family. "You are acquainted with a heavy debt of gratitude we owe your son, and it will explain the nature of the interest I now feel in your wrongs."

The keen eye of Marguerite studied the

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crimsoned features of Adelheid till forgetfulness got the better of discretion. The search was anxious, rather than triumphant, the feeling most dreaded by its subject; and, when her eyes were withdrawn, the mother of the youth became thoughtful and pensive. This expressive communion produced a deep and embarrassing silence, which each would gladly have broken, had they not been irresistibly tongue-tied by the rapidity and intensity of their thoughts.

"We know that Sigismund hath been of service to thee," observed Marguerite, who always addressed her young companion with the familiarity that belonged to her greater age, rather than with the respect which Adelheid had been accustomed to receive from those who were of a rank inferior to her own. "The brave boy hath spoken of it, though he hath spoken of it modestly."

"He had every right to do himself justice in his communications with those of his own family. Without his aid, my father would have been childless; and without his brave support, the child fatherless. Twice has he stood between us and death."

"I have heard of this," returned Marguerite, again fastening her penetrating eye on the tell-tale features of Adelheid, which never failed to brighten and glow, whenever there was allusion to the courage and self-devotion of him she secretly loved. "As to what thou say'st of the intimacy of our poor boy with those of his blood, cruel circumstances stand between us and our wishes. If Sigismund has told thee of whom he comes, he has also most probably told thee of the manner in which he passes, in the world, for that which he is not."

"I believe he has not withheld anything that he knew, and which it was proper to communicate to me," answered Adelheid, dropping her eyes before the attentive, expectant look of Marguerite. "He has spoken freely, and——"

"Thou wouldst have said——"

"Honorably, and as became a soldier," continued Adelheid, firmly.

"He has done well! This lightens my heart of one burden at least. No; God has destined us to this fate, and it would have grieved me that a son of mine should have failed of principle in an affair, of all others, in which it is most wanted. You look amazed, lady!"

"These sentiments, in one so situated, surprise as much as they delight me! If anything could excuse some looseness in the manner of regarding the usual ties of life, it would surely be to find one's self so placed, by no misconduct of our own, as to be a butt to the world's dislike and injustice; and yet, here, where there was reason to expect some resentment against fortune, I meet with sentiments that would honor a throne!"

"Thou thinkest as one more accustomed to consider thy fellow-creatures through the means of what men fancy, than through things as they are. This is the picture of youth, and inexperience, and innocence; but it is not the picture of life. 'Tis misfortune, and not prosperity, that hasteneth by proving our insufficiency for true happiness, and by leading the soul to depend on a power greater than any that is to be found on earth. We fall before the temptation of happiness, when we rise in adversity. If thou thinkest, innocent one, that noble and just sentiments belong to the fortunate, thou trustest to a false guide. There are evils which flesh cannot endure, it is true; but, removed from these overwhelming wants, we are strongest in the right when least tempted by vanity and ambition. More starving beggars abstain from stealing the crust they crave, than pampered gluttons deny themselves the luxury that kills them. They that live under the rod, see and dread the hand that holds it; they who riot in earth's glories, come at last to think they deserve the short-lived distinctions they enjoy. When thou goest down into the depths of misery, thou hast naught to fear except the anger of God! It is when raised above others that thou shouldst tremble most for thine own safety."

"This is not the manner in which the world is used to reason."

"Because the world is governed by those whose interest it is to pervert truth to their own objects, and not by those whose duties run hand in hand with the right. But we will say no more of this, lady; there is one that feels too acutely just now to admit truth to be too freely spoken."

"Dost feel thyself better, and more able to listen to thy friends, dear Christine?" asked

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Adelheid, taking the hand of the repudiated and deserted girl with the tenderness of an affectionate sister.

Until now the sufferer had only spoken the few words related, in mild reproof of her mother's indiscretion. That little had been uttered with parched lips and a choked voice, while the hue of her features was deadly pale, and her whole countenance betrayed intense mental anguish. But this display of interest in one of her own years and sex, of whose excellences she had been accustomed to hear such fervid descriptions from the warm-hearted Sigismund, and of whose sincerity she was assured by the subtle and quick instinct that unites the innocent and young, caused a quick and extreme change in her sensibilities. The grief which had been struggling and condensed, now flowed more freely from her eyes, and she threw herself sobbing and weeping, in a paroxysm of gentle, but overwhelming, feeling, on the bosom of this new-found friend. The experienced Marguerite smiled at this manifestation of kindness on the part of Adelheid, though even this expression of satisfaction was austere and regulated in one who had so long stood at bay with the world. And, after a short pause, she left the room, under the belief that such a communion with a spirit pure and inexperienced as her own, a communion so unusual to her daughter, would be more likely to produce a happy effect, if left to themselves, than when restrained by her presence.

The two girls wept in common for a long time after Marguerite had disappeared. The intercourse, chastened as it was by sorrow, and rendered endearing on the one side by a confiding ingenuousness, and on the other by generous pity, caused both to live in that short period, as it were, months together in a near and dear intimacy. Confidence is not always the growth of time. There are minds that meet each other with a species of affinity that resembles the cohesive property of matter, and with a promptitude and faith that only belongs to the purer essence of which they are composed. But when this attraction of the ethereal part of the being is aided by the feelings that have been warmed by an interest so tender as that which the hearts of both the maidens felt in a common object, its power is not only stronger, but quicker, in making itself felt. So much was already known by each of the other's character, fortunes, and hopes (always with the exception of Adelheid's most sacred secret, which Sigismund cherished as a deposit by far too sacred to be shared even with his sister), that the meeting under no circumstances could have been that of strangers, and their mutual knowledge came to an assistant to break down the barriers of those forms which were so irksome to their longings for a freer interchange of feeling and thought. Adelheid possessed too much intellectual tact to have recourse to the every-day language of consolation. When she did speak, which, as became her superior rank and less embarrassed situation, she was the first to do, it was in general but friendly allusions.

"Thou wilt go with us to Italy, in the morning," she said, drying her eyes; "my father quits Blonay, in company with the Signor Grimaldi, with to-morrow's sun, and thou wilt be of our company?"

"Where thou wilt—anywhere with thee—anywhere to hide my shame!"

The blood mounted to the temples of Adelheid, her air even appeared imposing to the eyes of the artless and unpractised Christine, as she answered—

"Shame is a word that applies to the mean and mercenary, to the vile and unfaithful," she said, with womanly and virtuous indignation; "but not to thee, love."

"Oh! do not, do not condemn him," whispered Christine, covering her face with her hands. "He has found himself unequal to bear the burden of our degradation, and he should be spoken of in pity rather than with hatred." Adelheid was silent; but she regarded the poor trembling girl, whose head now nestled in her bosom, with melancholy concern.

"Didst thou know him well?" she asked, in a low tone, following rather the chain of her own thoughts, than reflecting on the nature of the question she put. "I had hoped that this refusal would bring no other pain than the unavoidable mortification which I fear belongs to the weakness of our sex and our habits."

"Thou knowest not how dear preference is to the despised!—how cherished the thought of being loved becomes to those,

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who, out of their own narrow limits of natural friends, have been accustomed to meet only with contempt and aversion! Thou hast always been known, and courted, and happy! Thou canst not know how dear it is to the despised to seem even to be preferred!"

"Nay, say not this, I pray thee!" answered Adelheid, hurriedly, and with a throb of anguish at her heart; "there is little in this life that speaks fairly for itself. We are not always what we seem; and if we were, and far more miserable than anything but vice can make us, there is another state of being, in which justice—pure, unalloyed justice—will be done."

"I will go with thee to Italy," answered Christine, looking calm and resolved, while a glow of holy hope bloomed on each cheek; "when all is over, we will go together to a happier world!"

Adelheid folded the stricken and sensitive plant to her bosom. Again they wept together, but it was with a milder and sweeter sorrow than before.

CHAPTER XX.

"I'll show thee the best springs; I'll pluck thee berries."—*Tempest.*

THE day dawned clear and cloudless on the Leman, the morning that succeeded the Abbaye des Vignerons. Hundreds among the frugal and time-saving Swiss had left the town before the appearance of the light, and many strangers were crowding into the barks as the sun came bright and cheerfully over the rounded and smiling summits of the neighboring côtes. At this early hour all in and around the rock-seated castle of Blonay were astir and in motion. Menials were running with hurried air, from room to room, from court to terrace, and from lawn to tower. The peasants in the adjoining fields rested on their utensils of husbandry, in gaping, admiring attention to the preparations of their superiors. For though we are not writing of a strictly feudal age, the events it is our business to record took place long before the occurrence of those great political events which have since so materially changed the social state of Europe. Switzerland was then a sealed country to most of those who dwelt even in the adjoining nations, and the present advanced condition of roads and inns was quite unknown, not only to these mountaineers, but throughout the rest of what was then much more properly called the exclusively civilized portion of the globe, than it is to-day. Even horses were not often used in the passage of the Alps, but recourse was had to the surer-footed mule by the traveller, and, not unfrequently, by the more practised carrier and smuggler of those rude paths. Roads existed, it is true, as in other parts of Europe, in the countries of the plain, if any portion of the great undulating surface of that region deserve the name; but once within the mountains, with the exception of very inartificial wheel-tracks in the straitened and glen-like valleys, the hoof alone was to be trusted or indeed used.

The long train of travellers, then, that left the gates of Blonay, just as the fog began to stir on the wide alluvial meadows of the Rhone, were all in the saddle. A courier, accompanied by a sumpter-mule, had departed over-night to prepare the way for those who were to follow, and active young mountaineers had succeeded, from time to time, charged with different orders, issued in behalf of their comforts.

As the cavalcade passed beneath the arch of the great gate, the lively, spirit-stirring horn sounded a farewell air, to which custom had attached the signification of good wishes. It took the way toward the level of the Leman by means of a winding and picturesque bridle-path that led, among alpine meadows, groves, rocks, and hamlets, fairly to the water-side. Roger de Blonay and his two principal guests rode in front, the former seated on a war-horse that he had ridden years before as a soldier, and the two latter well mounted on beasts prepared for, and accustomed to, the mountains. Adelheid and Christine came next, riding by themselves, in the modest reserve of their maiden condition. Their discourse was low, confidential, and renewed at intervals. A few menials followed, and then came Sigismund at the side of the Signor Grimaldi's friend, and one of the family of Blonay, the latter

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of whom was destined to return with the Baron, after doing honor to their guests by seeing them as far as Villeneuve. The rear was brought up by muleteers, domestics, and those who led the beasts that bore the baggage. All of the former who intended to cross the Alps carried the fire-arms of the period at their saddle-bows, and each had his rapier, his *couteau de chasse*, or his weapon of more military fashion, so disposed about his person as to denote it was considered an arm for whose use some occasion might possibly occur.

As the departure from Blonay was unaccompanied by any of those leave-takings which usually impress a touch of melancholy on the traveller, most of the cavalcade, as they issued into the pure and exhilarating air of the morning, were sufficiently disposed to enjoy the loveliness of the landscape, and to indulge in the cheerfulness and delight that a scene so glorious is apt to awaken in all who are alive to the beauties of nature.

Adelheid gladly pointed out to her companion the various objects of the view, as a means of recalling the thoughts of Christine from her own particular griefs, which were heightened by regret for the loss of her mother, from whom she was now seriously separated for the first time in her life, since their communications, though secret, had been constant during the years she had dwelt under another roof. The latter gratefully lent herself to the kind intentions of her new friend, and endeavored to be pleased with all she beheld, though it was such pleasure as the sad and mourning admit with a jealous reservation of their own secret causes of woe.

"Yonder tower, toward which we advance, is Châtelard," said the heiress of Willading to the daughter of Balthazar, in the pursuit of her kind intention; "a hold nearly as ancient and honorable as this we have just quitted, though not so constantly the dwelling of the same family; for those of Blonay have been a thousand years dwellers on the same rock, always favorably known for their faith and courage."

"Surely if there is anything in life that can compensate for its every-day evils," observed Christine, in a manner of mild regret, and perhaps with the perversity of grief, "it must be to have come from those who have always been known and honored among the great and happy! Even virtue and goodness, and great deeds, scarce give a respect like that we feel for the Sire de Blonay, whose family has been seated, as thou hast just said, a thousand years on that rock above us!"

Adelheid was mute. She appreciated the feeling which had so naturally led her companion to a reflection like this, and she felt the difficulty of applying balm to a wound as deep as that which had been inflicted on her companion.

"We are not always to suppose those the most happy that the world most honors," she at length answered; "the respect to which we are accustomed comes in time to be necessary, without being a source of pleasure; and the hazard of incurring its loss is more than equal to the satisfaction of its possession."

"Thou wilt at least admit that to be despised and shunned is a curse to which nothing can reconcile us."

"We will speak now of other things, dear. It may be long ere either of us again see this grand display of rock and water, of brown mountain and shining glacier; we will not prove ourselves ungrateful for the happiness we have by repining for that which is impossible."

Christine quietly yielded to the kind intention of her new friend, and they rode on in silence, picking their way along the winding path, until the whole party, after a long but pleasant descent, reached the road, which is nearly washed by the waters of the lake. There has already been allusion, in the earlier pages of our work, to the extraordinary beauties of the route near this extremity of the Leman. After climbing to the height of the mild and healthful Montreux, the cavalcade again descended under a canopy of nut-trees, to the gate of Chillon, and sweeping around the margin of the sheet, it reached Villeneuve by the hour that had been named for an early morning repast. Here all dismounted, and refreshed themselves awhile, when Roger de Blonay and his attendants, after many exchanges of warm and sincere good wishes, took their final leave.

The sun was scarcely yet visible in the deep glens, when those who were destined for St. Bernard were again in the saddle.

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The road now necessarily left the lake, traversing those broad alluvial bottoms which have been deposited during thirty centuries by the washings of the Rhone, aided, if faith is to be given to geological symptoms and to ancient traditions, by certain violent convulsions of nature. For several hours our travellers rode amid such a deep fertility, and such a luxuriance of vegetation, that their path bore more analogy to an excursion on the wide plains of Lombardy, than to one amid the usual Swiss scenery; although, unlike the boundless expanse of the Italian garden, the view was limited on each side by perpendicular barriers of rock, that were piled for thousands of feet into the heavens, and which were merely separated from each other by a league or two, a distance that dwindled to miles in its effect on the eye, a consequence of the grandeur of the scale on which nature has reared these vast piles. It was high noon when Melchior de Willading and his venerable friend led the way across the foaming Rhone at the celebrated bridge of St. Maurice. Here the country of the Valais, then, like Geneva, an ally, and not a confederate of the Swiss cantons, was entered, and all objects, both animate and inanimate, began to assume that mixture of the grand, the sterile, the luxuriant, and the revolting, for which this region is so generally known. Adelheid gave an involuntary shudder, her imagination having been prepared by rumor for even more than the truth would have given reason to expect, when the gate of St. Maurice swung back upon its hinges, literally inclosing the party in this wild, desolate and yet romantic region. As they proceeded along the Rhone, however, she and those of her companions to whom the scene was new were constantly wondering at some unlooked-for discrepancy, that drove them from admiration to disgust—from the exclamations of delight to the chill of disappointment. The mountains on every side were dreary, and without the rich relief of the pastured eminences, but most of the valley was rich and generous. In one spot a sac d'eau, one of those reservoirs of water which form among the glaciers on the summits of the rocks, had broken, and descending like a water-spout, it had swept before it every vestige of cultivation, covering wide breadths of the meadows with a débris that resembled chaos. A frightful barrenness, and the most smiling fertility, were in absolute contact; patches of green, that had been accidentally favored by some lucky formation of the ground, sometimes appearing like oases of the desert, in the very centre of a sterility that would put the labor and the art of man at defiance for a century. In the midst of this terrific picture of want sat a crétin, with his semi-human attributes, the lolling tongue, the blunted faculties, and the degraded appetites, to complete the desolation. Issuing from this belt of annihilated vegetations the scene became again as pleasant as the fancy could desire, or the eye crave. Fountains leaped from rock to rock in the sun's rays; the valley was green and gentle; the mountains began to show varied and pleasing forms; and happy smiling faces appeared, whose freshness and regularity were perhaps of a cast superior to that of most of the Swiss. In short, the Valais was then, as now, a country of opposite extremes, but in which, perhaps, there is a predominance of the repulsive and inhospitable.

It was fairly nightfall, notwithstanding the trifling distance they had journeyed, when the travellers reached Martigny, where dispositions had previously been made for their reception during the hours of sleep. Here preparations were made to seek their rest at an early hour, in order to be in readiness for the fatiguing toil of the following day.

Martigny is situated at the point where the great valley of the Rhone changes its direction from a north and south to an east and west course, and it is the spot whence three of the celebrated mountain paths diverge, to make as many passages of the upper Alps. Here are the two routes of the great and little St. Bernard, both of which lead into Italy, and that of the Col-de-Balme, which crosses a spur of the Alps into Savoy toward the celebrated valley of Chamouni. It was the intention of the Baron de Willading and his friend to journey by the former of these roads, as has so often been mentioned in these pages, their destination being the capital of Piedmont. The passage of the great St. Bernard, though so long known by its ancient and hospitable convent, the

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most elevated habitation in Europe, and in these later times so famous for the passage of a conquering army, is but a secondary Alpine pass, considered in reference to the grandeur of its scenery. The ascent, so inartificial even to this hour, is long and comparatively without danger, and in general it is sufficiently direct, there being no very precipitous rise like those of the Gemmi, the Grimsel, and various other passes in Switerland and Italy, except at the very neck, or col, of the mountain, where the rock is to be literally climbed on the rude and broad steps that so frequently occur among the paths of the Alps and the Apennines. The fatigue of this passage comes, therefore, rather from its length, and the necessity of unremitted diligence, than from any excessive labor demanded by the ascent; and the reputation acquired by the great captain of our age, in leading an army across its summit, has been obtained more by the military combinations of which it formed the principal feature, the boldness of the conception, and the secrecy and promptitude with which so extensive an operation was effected, than by the physical difficulties that were overcome. In the latter particular, the passage of St. Bernard, as this celebrated coup de main is usually called, has frequently been outdone in our own wilds; for armies have often traversed regions of broad streams, broken mountains, and uninterrupted forests, for weeks at a time, in which the mere bodily labor of any given number of days would be found to be greater than that endured on this occasion by the followers of Napoleon. The estimate we attach to every exploit is so dependent on the magnitude of its results, that men rarely come to a perfectly impartial judgment on its merits; the victory or defeat, however simple or bloodless, that shall shake or assure the interests of civilized society, being always esteemed by the world an event of greater importance than the happiest combinations of thought and valor that affect only the welfare of some remote and unknown people. By the just consideration of this truth, we come to understand the value of a nation's possessing confidence in itself, extensive power, and a unity commensurate to its means; since small and divided States waste their strength in acts too insignificant for general interest, frittering away their mental riches, no less than their treasure and blood, in supporting interests that fail to enlist the sympathies of any beyond the pale of their own borders. The nation which, by the adverse circumstances of numerical inferiority, poverty of means, failure of enterprise, or want of opinion, cannot sustain its own citizens in the acquisition of a just renown, is deficient in one of the first and most indispensable elements of greatness; glory, like riches, feeding itself, and being most apt to be found where its fruits have already accumulated. We see, in this fact, among other conclusions, the importance of an acquisition of such habits of manliness of thought as will enable us to decide on the merits and demerits of what is done among ourselves, and of shaking off that dependence on others which is too much the custom of some among us to dignify with the pretending title of deference to knowledge and taste, but which, in truth, possesses some such share of true modesty and diffidence as the footman is apt to exhibit when exulting in the renown of his master.

This little digression has induced us momentarily to overlook the incidents of the tale. Few who possess the means, venture into the stormy regions of the upper Alps, at the late season in which the present party reached the hamlet of Martigny, without seeking the care of one or more suitable guides. The services of these men are useful in a variety of ways, but in none more than in offering the advice which long familiarity with the signs of the heavens, the temperature of the air, and the direction of the winds, enables them to give. The Baron de Willading, and his friend, immediately dispatched a messenger for a mountaineer, of the name of Pierre Dumont, who enjoyed a fair name for fidelity, and who was believed to be better acquainted with all the difficulties of the ascent and descent, than any other who journeyed among the glens of that part of the Alps. At the present day, when hundreds ascend to the convent from curiosity alone, every peasant of sufficient strength and intelligence becomes a guide, and the little community of the Lower Valais finds the transit of the idle and rich such a fruit-

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ful source of revenue, that it has been induced to regulate the whole by very useful and just ordinances; but at the period of the tale, this Pierre was the only individual who, by fortunate concurrences, had obtained a name among affluent foreigners, and who was at all in demand with that class of travellers. He was not long in presenting himself in the public-room of the inn—a hale, florid, muscular man of sixty, with every appearance of permanent health and vigor, but with a slight and nearly imperceptible difficulty of breathing.

"Thou art Pierre Dumont?" observed the Baron, studying the open physiognomy and well-set frame of the Valaisan, with satisfaction. "Thou hast been mentioned by more than one traveller in his book."

The stout mountaineer raised himself in pride, and endeavored to acknowledge the compliment in the manner of his well-meant but rude courtesy; for refinement did not then extend its finesse and its deceit among the glens of Switzerland.

"They have done me honor, monsieur," he said: "it has been my good fortune to cross the Col with many brave gentlemen and fair ladies—and in two instances with princes." (Though a sturdy republican, Pierre was not insensible to worldly rank.) "The pious monks know me well; and they who enter the convent are not the worse received for being my companions. I shall be glad to lead so fair a party from our cold valley into the sunny glens of Italy, for, if the truth must be spoken, nature has placed us on the wrong side of the mountain for our comfort, though we have our advantage over those who live even in Turin and Milan, in matters of greater importance."

"What can be the superiority of a Valaisan over the Lombard or the Piedmontese?" demanded the Signor Grimaldi quickly, like a man who was curious to hear the reply. "A traveller should seek all kinds of knowledge, and I take this to be a newly discovered fact."

"Liberty, signor! We are our own masters; we have been so since the day when our fathers sacked the castles of the barons, and compelled their tyrants to become their equals. I think of this each time I reach the warm plains of Italy, and return to my cottage a more contented man, for the reflection."

"Spoken like a Swiss, though it is uttered by an ally of the cantons!" cried Melchior de Willading, heartily. "This is the spirit, Gaetano, which sustains our mountaineers, and renders them more happy amid their frosts and rocks, than thy Genoese on his warm and glowing bay."

"The word liberty, Melchior, is more used than understood, and as much abused as used," returned the Signor Grimaldi gravely. "A country on which God hath laid his finger in displeasure, as on this, needs have some such consolation as the phantom with which the honest Pierre appears to be so well satisfied. But, signor guide, have many travellers tried the passage of late, and what dost thou think of our prospects in making the attempt? We hear gloomy tales, sometimes, of thy alpine paths in that Italy thou hold'st so cheap."

"Your pardon, noble signor, if the frankness of a mountaineer has carried me too far. I do not undervalue your Piedmont, because I love our Valais more. A country may be excellent, even though another should be better. As for the travellers, none of note have gone up the Col of late, though there have been the usual number of vagabonds and adventurers. The savor of the convent kitchen will reach the noses of these knaves here in the valley, though we have a long twelve leagues to journey in getting from one to the other."

The Signor Grimaldi waited until Adelheid and Christine, who were preparing to retire for the night, were out of hearing, and he resumed his questions.

"Thou hast not spoken of the weather?"

"We are in one of the most uncertain and treacherous months of the good season, messieurs. The winter is gathering among the upper Alps, and in a month in which the frosts are flying about like uneasy birds that do not know where to alight, one can hardly say whether he hath need of his cloak or not."

"San Francesco! Dost think I am dallying with thee, friend, about a thickness more or less of cloth? I am hinting at avalanches and falling rocks—at whirlwinds and tempests!"

Pierre laughed and shook his head, though he answered vaguely as became his business.

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"These are Italian opinions of our hills, signor," he said; "they savor of the imagination. Our pass is not as often troubled with the avalanche as some that are known, even in the melting snows. Had you looked at the peaks from the lake, you would have seen that, the hoary glaciers excepted, they are still all brown and naked. The snow must fall from the heavens before it can fall in the avalanche, and we are yet, I think, a few days from the true winter."

"Thy calculations are made with nicety, friend," returned the Genoese, not sorry, however, to hear the guide speak with so much apparent confidence of the weather, "and we are obliged to thee in proportion. What of the travellers thou hast named? Are there brigands on our path?"

"Such rogues have been known to infest the place, but in general, there is too little to be gained for the risk. Your rich traveller is not an every-day sight among our rocks; and you well know, signor, that there may be too few, as well as too many, on a path, for your freebooter."

The Italian was distrustful by habit on all such subjects, and he threw a quick suspicious glance at the guide. But the frank open countenance of Pierre removed all doubt of his honesty, to say nothing of the effect of a well-established reputation.

"But thou hast spoken of certain vagabonds who have preceded us?"

"In that particular, matters might be better," answered the plain-minded mountaineer, dropping his head in an attitude of meditation so naturally expressed as to give additional weight to his words. "Many of bad appearance have certainly gone up today; such as a Neapolitan named Pippo, who is anything but a saint—a certain pilgrim, who will be nearer heaven at the convent than he will be at the death—St. Pierre pray for me if I do the man injustice!—and one or two more of the same brood. There is another that hath gone up also, post haste, and with good reason as they say, for he hath made himself the butt of all the jokers in Vévey on account of some foolery in the games of the abbaye—a certain Jacques Colis."

The name was repeated by several near the speaker.

"The same, messieurs. It would seem that the Sieur Colis would fain take a maiden to wife in the public sports, and when her birth came to be known, his bride was no other than the child of Balthazar, the common headsman of Berne!"

A general silence betrayed the embarrassment of most of the listeners.

"And that tale hath already reached this glen," said Sigismund, in a tone so deep and firm as to cause Pierre to start, while the two old nobles looked in another direction, feigning not to observe what was passing.

"Rumor hath a nimbler foot than a mule, young officer," answered the honest guide. "The tale, as you call it, will have travelled across the mountains sooner than they who bore it—though I never knew how such a miracle could pass—but so it is; report goes faster than the tongue that spreads it, and if there be a little untruth to help it along, the wind itself is scarcely swifter. Honest Jacques Colis has bethought him to get the start of his story, but, my life on it, though he is active enough in getting away from his mockers, that he finds it, with all the additions, safely housed in the inn at Turin when he reaches that city himself."

"These, then, are all?" interrupted the Signor Grimaldi, who saw, by the heaving bosom of Sigismund, that it was time in mercy to interpose.

"Not so, signor—there is still another, and one I like less than any. A countryman of your own, who, impudently enough, calls himself Il Maledetto."

"Maso!"

"The very same."

"Honest, courageous Maso, and his noble dog?"

"Signor, you describe the man so well in some things, that I wonder that you know so little of him in others. Maso hath not his equal on the road for activity and courage, and the beast is second only to our mastiffs of the convent for the same qualities; but when you speak of the master's honesty, you speak of that for which the world gives him little credit, and do great disparagement to the brute, which is much the best of the two, in this respect."

"This may be true enough," rejoined the Signor Grimaldi, turning anxiously toward

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his companions:—"man is a strange compound of good and evil; his acts when left to natural impulses are so different from what they become on calculation that one can scarcely answer for a man of Maso's temperament. We know him to be a most efficient friend, and such a man would be apt to make a very dangerous enemy! His qualities were not given to him by halves. And yet we have a strong circumstance in our favor; for he who hath once done the least service to a fellow-creature feels a sort of paternity in him he hath saved, and would be little likely to rob himself of the pleasure of knowing that there are some of his kind who owe him a grateful recollection."

This remark was answered by Melchior de Willading, in the same spirit, and the guide, perceiving that he was no longer wanted, withdrew.

Soon after the travellers retired to rest.

CHAPTER XXI.

"As yet the trembling year is unconfirmed,
And winter oft, at eve, resumes the breeze,
Chills the pale morn, and bids his driving sleets
Deform the day delightful;——"—THOMSON.

THE horn of Pierre Dumont was blowing beneath the windows of the inn of Martigny, with the peep of dawn. Then followed the appearance of drowsy domestics, the saddling of unwilling mules, and the loading of baggage. A few minutes later the little caravan was assembled, for the cavalcade almost deserved this name, and the whole were in motion for the summits of the Alps.

The travellers now left the valley of the Rhone, to bury themselves amid those piles of misty and confused mountains, which formed the background of the picture they had studied from the castle of Blonay and the sheet of the Leman. They soon plunged into a glen, and following the windings of a brawling torrent, were led gradually, and by many turnings, into a country of bleak upland pasturage, where the inhabitants gained a scanty livelihood, principally by means of their dairies.

A few leagues above Martigny, the paths again separated, one inclining to the left toward the elevated valley that has since become so celebrated in the legends of this wild region, by the formation of a little lake in its glacier, which, becoming too heavy for its foundation, broke through its barrier of ice, and descended in a mountain of water to the Rhone, a distance of many leagues, sweeping before it every vestige of civilization that crossed its course, and even changing in many places the face of nature itself. Here the glittering peak of Velan became visible, and though so much nearer to the eye than when viewed from Vévey, it was still a distant shining pile, grand in its solitude and mystery, on which the sight loved to dwell, as it studies the pure and spotless edges of some sleepy cloud.

It has already been said, that the ascent of the great St. Bernard, with the exception of occasional hills and hollows, is nowhere very precipitous but at the point at which the last rampart of rock is to be overcome. On the contrary, the path, for leagues at a time, passes along tolerably even valleys, though of necessity the general direction is upward, and for most of the distance through a country that admits of cultivation, though the meagreness of the soil, and the shortness of the seasons, render but an indifferent return to the toil of the husbandman. In this respect it differs from most of the other Alpine passes; but if it want the variety, wildness, and sublimity of the Splügen, the St. Gothard, the Gemmi, and the Simplon, it is still an ascent on a magnificent scale, and he who journeys on its path is raised as it were by insensible degrees, to an elevation that gradually changes all his customary associations with the things of the lower world.

From the moment of quitting the inn to that of the first halt, Melchior de Willading and the Signor Grimaldi rode in company, as on the previous day. These old friends had much to communicate in confidential discourse which the presence of Roger de Blonay, and the importunities of the bailiff, had hitherto prevented them from freely saying. Both had thought maturely, too, on the situation of Adelheid, of her hopes, and of her future fortunes, and both had reasoned much as two old nobles of that day, who were not without strong sympathies for their kind while they were too practised to

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overlook the world and its ties, would be likely to reason on an affair of this delicate nature.

"There came a feeling of regret, perhaps I might fairly call it by its proper name, of envy," observed the Genoese, in pursuance of the subject which engrossed most of their time and thoughts, as they rode slowly along, the bridles dangling from the necks of their mules,—"there came a feeling of regret, when I first saw the fair creature that calls thee father, Melchior. God has dealt mercifully by me, in respect to many things that make men happy; but he rendered my marriage accursed, not only in its bud, but in its fruit. Thy child is dutiful and loving, all that a father can wish; and yet here is this unusual attachment come to embarrass, if not to defeat, thy fair and just hopes for her welfare! This is no common affair, that a few threats of bolts and a change of scene will cure, but a rooted affection that is but too firmly based on esteem. By San Francesco, but I think, at times, thou wouldst do well to permit the ceremony!"

"Should it be our fortune to meet with the absconding Jacques Colis at Turin, he might give us different counsel," answered the old Baron dryly.

"That is a dreadful barrier to our wishes! Were the boy anything but a headsman's child! I do not think thou couldst object, Melchior, had he merely come of a hind, or of some common follower of thy family?"

"It were far better that he should have come of one like ourselves, Gaetano. I reason but little on the dogmas of this or that sect in politics; but I feel and think, in this affair, as the parent of an only child. All those usages and opinions in which we are trained, my friend, are so many ingredients in our happiness, let them be silly or wise, just or oppressive; and though I would fain do that which is right to the rest of mankind, I could wish to begin to practise innovation with any other than my own daughter. Let them who like philosophy, and justice, and natural rights so well, commence by setting us the example."

"Thou hast hit the stumbling-block that causes a thousand well-digested plans for the improvement of the world to fail, honest Melchior. Could we toil with others' limbs, sacrifice with others' groans, and pay with others' means, there would be no end to our industry, our disinterestedness, or our liberality—and yet it were a thousand pities that so sweet a girl and so noble a youth should not yoke!"

"'Twould be a yoke indeed, for a daughter of the house of Willading," returned the graver father, with emphasis. "I have looked at this matter in every face that becomes me, Gaetano, and though I would not rudely repulse one that hath saved my life, by driving him from my company, at a moment when even strangers consort for mutual aid and protection, at Turin we must part forever!"

"I know not how to approve, nor yet how to blame thee, poor Melchior! 'Twas a sad scene, that of the refusal to wed Balthazar's daughter, in the presence of so many thousands!"

"I take it as a happy and kind warning of the precipice to which a foolish tenderness was leading us both, my friend."

"Thou may'st have reason; and yet I wish thou wert more in error than ever Christian was! These are rugged mountains, Melchior, and fairly passed, it might be so arranged that the boy should forget Switzerland forever. He might become a Genoese, in which event, dost thou not see the means of overcoming some of the present difficulty?"

"Is the heiress of my house a vagrant, Signor Grimaldi, to forget her country and birth?"

"I am childless, in effect, if not in fact; and where there are the will and the means, the end should not be wanting. We will speak of this under the warmer sun of Italy, which they say is apt to render hearts tender."

"The hearts of the young and amorous, good Gaetano, but, unless much changed of late, it is as apt to harden those of the old, as any sun I know of," returned the Baron, shaking his head, though it much exceeded his power to smile at his own pleasantry when speaking on this painful subject. "Thou knowest that in this matter I act only for the welfare of Adelheid, without thought of myself; and it would little comport with the honor of a Baron of an ancient house, to be

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the grandfather of children who come of a race of executioners."

The Signor Grimaldi succeeded better than his friend in raising a smile, for, more accustomed to dive into the depths of human feeling, he was not slow in detecting the mixture of motives that were silently exercising their long-established influence over the heart of his really well-intentioned companion.

"So long as thou speakest of the wisdom of respecting men's opinions, and the danger of wrecking thy daughter's happiness by running counter to their current, I agree with thee to the letter; but, to me, it seems possible so to place the affair, that the world shall imagine all is in rule, and, by consequence, all proper. If we can overcome ourselves, Melchior, I apprehend no great difficulty in blinding others."

The head of the Bernois dropped upon his breast, and he rode a long distance in that attitude, reflecting on the course it most became him to pursue, and struggling with the conflicting sentiments which troubled his upright but prejudiced mind. As his friend understood the nature of this inward strife, he ceased to speak, and a long silence succeeded the discourse.

It was different with those who followed. Though long accustomed to gaze at their native mountains from a distance, this was the first occasion on which Adelheid and her companion had ever actually penetrated into their glens, or journeyed on their broken and changing faces. The path of St. Bernard, therefore, had all the charm of novelty, and their youthful and ardent minds were soon won from meditating on their own causes of unhappiness, to admiration of the sublime works of nature. The cultivated taste of Adelheid, in particular, was quick in detecting those beauties of a more subtle kind which the less instructed are apt to overlook, and she found additional pleasure in pointing them out to the ingenuous and wondering Christine, who received these her first lessons in that grand communion with nature, which is pregnant with so much unalloyed delight, with gratitude and a readiness of comprehension, that amply repaid her instructress. Sigismund was an attentive and pleased listener to what was passing, though one who had so often passed the mountains, and who had seen them familiarly on their warmer and more sunny side, had little to learn, himself, even from so skilful and alluring a teacher. As they ascended, the air became purer and less impregnated with the humidity of its lower currents; changing, by a process as fine as that wrought by a chemical application, the hues and aspect of every object in the view. A vast hill-side lay basking in the sun, which illuminated on its rounded swells a hundred long stripes of grain in every stage of verdure, resembling so much delicate velvet that was thrown in a variety of accidental faces to the light, while the shadows ran away, to speak technically, from this *foyer de lumière* of the picture, in gradations of dusky russet and brown, until the *colonne de vigeur* was obtained in the deep black cast from the overhanging branches of a wood of larch in the depths of some ravine, into which the sight with difficulty penetrated. These were the beauties on which Adelheid most loved to dwell, for they are always the charms that soonest strike the true admirer of nature, when he finds himself raised above the lower and less purified strata of the atmosphere, into the regions of more radiant light and brightness. It is thus that the physical, no less than the moral, vision becomes elevated above the impurities that cling to this nether world, attaining a portion of that spotless and sublime perception as we ascend, by which we are early assimilated to the truths of creation; a poetical type of the greater and purer enjoyment we feel, as morally receding from earth, we draw nearer to heaven.

The party rested for several hours, as usual, at the little mountain hamlet of Liddes. At the present time it is not uncommon for the traveller, favored by a wheel-track along this portion of the route, to ascend the mountain and to return to Martigny in the same day. The descent in particular, after reaching the village just named, is soon made; but at the period of our tale, such an exploit, if ever made, was of very rare occurrence. The fatigue of being in the saddle so many hours compelled our party to remain at the inn much longer than is now practised, and their utmost hope was to be able to reach the convent before the last rays of the sun had ceased to light the glittering peak of Velan.

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There occurred here, too, some unexpected detention on the part of Christine, who had retired with Sigismund soon after reaching the inn, and who did not rejoin the party until the impatience of the guide had more than once manifested itself in such complaints as one in his situation is apt to hazard. Adelheid saw with pain, when her friend did at length rejoin them, that she had been weeping bitterly; but, too delicate to press her for an explanation on a subject in which it was evident the brother and sister did not desire to bestow their confidence, she communicated her readiness to depart to the domestics, without the slightest allusion to the change in Christine's appearance, or to the unexpected delay of which she had been the cause.

Pierre muttered an ave in thankfulness that the long halt was ended. He then crossed himself with one hand, while with the other he flourished his whip, among a crowd of gaping urchins and slavering crétins, to clear the way for those he guided. His followers were, in the main, of a different mood. If the traveller too often reaches the inn hungry and disposed to find fault, he usually quits it good-humored and happy. The restoration, as it is well called in France, effected by means of the larder and the resting of wearied limbs, is usually communicated to the spirits; and it must be a crusty humor indeed, or singularly bad fare, that prevents a return to a placid state of mind. The party under the direction of Pierre formed no exception to the general rule. The two old nobles had so far forgotten the subject of their morning dialogue, as to be facetious; and, ere long, even their gentle companions were disposed to laugh at some of their sallies, in spite of the load of care that weighed so constantly and so heavily on both. In short, such is the waywardness of our feelings, and so difficult is it to be always sorrowful as well as always happy, that the well-satisfied landlady, who had, in truth, received the full value of a very indifferent fare, was ready to affirm, as she courtesied her thanks on the dirty threshold, that a merrier party had never left her door.

"We shall take our revenge out of the casks of the good Augustines to-night for the sour liquor of this inn. Is it not so, honest Pierre?" demanded the Signor Grimaldi, adjusting himself in the saddle, as they got clear of the stones, sinuosities, projecting roofs, and filth of the village, into the more agreeable windings of the ordinary path again. "Our friend, the clavier, is apprised of the visit, and as we have already gone through fair and foul in company, I look to his fellowship for some compensation for the frugal meal of which we have just partaken."

"Father Xavier is a hospitable and happy-minded priest, signor; and that the saints will long leave him keeper of the convent-keys, is the prayer of every muleteer, guide, or pilgrim, who crosses the Col. I wish we were going up the rough steps by which we are to climb the last rock of the mountain, at this very moment, messieurs, and that all the rest of the way were as fairly done as this we have so happily passed."

"Dost thou anticipate difficulty, friend?" demanded the Italian, leaning forward on his saddle-bow, for his quick observation had caught the examining glance that the guide threw around the heavens.

"Difficulty is a meaning not easily admitted by a mountaineer, signor, and I am one of the last to think of it, or feel its dread. Still, we are near the end of the season, and these hills are high and bleak, and those that follow are delicate flowers for a stormy heath. Toil is always sweeter in the remembrance than in the expectation. I mean no more, if I mean that."

Pierre stopped his march as he ceased speaking. He stood on a little eminence of the path, whence, by looking back, he commanded a view of the opening among the mountains which indicates the site of the valley of the Rhone. The look was long and understanding; but, when it was ended, he turned and resumed his march with the business-like air of one more disposed to act than to speculate on the future. But for the few words which had just escaped him, this natural movement would have attracted no attention; and, as it was, it was observed by none but the Signor Grimaldi, who would himself have attached little importance to the whole, had the guide maintained his usual pace.

As is common in the Alps, the conductor of the travellers went on foot, leading the whole party at such a gait as he thought

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most expedient for man and beast. Hitherto, Pierre had proceeded with sufficient leisure, rendering it necessary for those who followed to observe the same moderation; but he now walked sensibly faster, and frequently so fast as to make it necessary for the mules to break into easy trots, in order to maintain their proper stations. All this, however, was ascribed by most of the party to the formation of the ground, for, after leaving Liddes, there is a long reach of what, among the upper valleys of the Alps, may by comparison be called a level road. This industry, too, was thought to be doubly necessary, in order to repair the time lost at the inn, for the sun was already dipping toward the western boundary of their narrow view of the heavens, and the temperature announced, if not a sudden change in the weather, at least the near approach of the periodical turn of the day.

"We travel by a very ancient path," observed the Signor Grimaldi, when his thoughts had reverted from their reflections on the movements of the guide to the circumstance of their present situation. "A very reverend path, it might be termed, in compliment to the worthy monks who do so much to lessen its dangers, and to its great antiquity. History speaks often of its use by different leaders of armies, for it has long been a thoroughfare for those who journey between the north and the south, whether it be in strife or in amity. In the time of Augustus it was the route commonly used by the Roman legions in their passages to and from Helvetia and Gaul; the followers of Cæcina went by these gorges to their attack upon Otho, and the Lombards made the same use of it, five hundred years later. It was often trod by armed bands, in the wars of Charles of Burgundy, those of Milan, and in the conquests of Charlemagne. I remember a tale in which it is said that a horde of infidel Corsairs from the Mediterranean penetrated by this road, and seized upon the bridge at St. Maurice with a view to plunder. As we are not the first, so it is probable we are not to be the last who have trusted themselves in these regions, bent on our objects, whether of love or of strife."

"Signor," observed Pierre, respectfully, when the Genoese ceased speaking, "if your Eccellenza would make your discourse less learned, and more in those familiar words which can be said under a brisk movement, it might better suit the time and the great necessity there is to be diligent."

"Dost thou apprehend danger? Are we behind our time? Speak; for I dislike concealment."

"Danger has a strong meaning in the mouth of a mountaineer, signor; for what is security on this path, might be thought alarming lower down in the valleys; I say it not. But the sun is touching the rocks, as you see, and we are drawing near to places where a misstep of a mule in the dark might cost us dear. I would that all diligently improve the daylight while they can."

The Genoese did not answer, but he urged his mule again to a gait that was more in accordance with the wishes of Pierre. The movement was followed, as a matter of course, by the rest, and the whole party was once more in a gentle trot, which was scarcely sufficient, however, to keep even pace with the long, impatient, and rapid strides of Pierre, who, notwithstanding his years, appeared to get over the ground with a facility that cost him no effort. Hitherto the heat had not been small, and, in that pure atmosphere, all its powers were felt during the time the sun's rays fell into the valley; but, the instant they were intercepted by a brown and envious peak of the mountains, their genial influence was succeeded by a chill that sufficiently proved how necessary was the presence of the luminary to the comfort of those who dwelt at that great elevation. The females sought their mantles the moment the bright light was followed by the usual shadow; nor was it long before even the more aged of the gentlemen were seen unstrapping their cloaks, and taking the customary precautions against the effects of the evening air.

The reader is not to suppose, however, that all these little incidents of the way occurred in a time as brief as that which has been consumed in the narration. A long line of path was travelled over, before the Signor Grimaldi and his friend were cloaked, and divers hamlets and cabins were successively passed. The alteration from the warmth of day to the chill of evening also was accompanied by a

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corresponding change in the appearance of the objects they passed. St. Pierre, a cluster of stone-roofed cottages, which bore all the characteristics of the inhospitable region for which they had been constructed, was the last village; though there was a hamlet, at the bridge of Hudri, composed of a few dreary abodes, which, by their aspect, seemed the connecting link between the dwellings of men and the caverns of beasts. Vegetation had long been growing more and more meagre, and it was now fast melting away into still deeper and irretrievable traces of sterility, like the shadows of a picture passing through their several transitions of color to the depth of the background. The larches and cedars diminished gradually in size and numbers, until the straggling and stunted tree became a bush, and the latter finally disappeared in the shape of a tuft of pale green, that adhered to some crevice in the rocks like so much moss. Even the mountain grasses, for which Switzerland is so justly celebrated, grew thin and wiry; and by the time the travellers reached the circular basin at the foot of the peak of Velan, which is called La Plaine de Prou, there only remained, in the most genial season of the year, and then in isolated spots between the rocks, a sufficiency of nourishment for the support of a small flock of adventurous, nibbling, and hungry goats.

The basin just alluded to is in an opening among high pinnacles, and is nearly surrounded by naked and rugged rocks. The path led through its centre, always ascending on an inclined plane, and disappeared through a narrow gorge around the brow of a beetling cliff. Pierre pointed out the latter as the pass by far the most dangerous on this side the Col, in the season of the melting snows, avalanches frequently rolling from its crags. There was no cause for apprehending this well-known Alpine danger, however, in the present moment; for, with the exception of Mont-Velan, all above and around them lay the same dreary dress of sterility. Indeed, it would not be easy for the imagination to conceive a more eloquent picture of desolation than that which met the eyes of the travellers, as, following the course of the run of water that trickled through the middle of the inhospitable valley, the certain indication of the general direction of their course, they reached its centre.

The time was getting to be that of early twilight, but the sombre color of the rocks, streaked and venerable by the ferruginous hue with which time had coated their sides, and the depth of the basin, gave to their situation a melancholy gloom passing the duskiness of the hour. On the other hand, the light rested bright and gloriously on the snowy peak of Velan, still many thousand feet above them, though in plain and apparently near view; while rich touches of the setting sun were gleaming on several of the brown natural battlements of the Alps, which, worn with eternal exposure to the storms, still lay in sublime confusion at a most painful elevation in their front. The azure vault that canopied all, had that look of distant glory and of grand repose, which so often meets the eyes, and so forcibly strikes the mind, of him who travels in the deep valleys and imbedded lakes of Switzerland. The glacier of Valsorey descended from the upper region nearly to the edge of the valley, bright and shining, its lower margin streaked and dirty with the *débris* of the overhanging rocks, as if doomed to the fate of all that came upon the earth, that of sharing its impurities.

There no longer existed any human habitation between the point which the travellers had now attained and the convent, though more modern speculation, in this age of curiosity and restlessness, has been induced to rear a substitute for an inn in the spot just described, with the hope of gleaning a scanty tribute from those who fail of arriving in season to share the hospitality of the monks. The chilliness of the air increased faster even than the natural change of the hour would seem to justify, and there were moments when the dull sound of the wind descended to their ears, though not a breath was stirring a withered and nearly solitary blade of grass at their feet. Once or twice, large black clouds drove across the opening above them, resembling heavy-winged vultures sailing in the void, preparatory to a swoop upon their prey.

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CHAPTER XXII.

"Through this gap
On and say nothing, lést a word, a breath,
Bring down a winter's snow, enough to whelm
The armed files that, night and day, were seen
Winding from cliff to cliff in loose array,
To conquer at Marengo."—*Italy*.

PIERRE DUMONT halted in the middle of the sterile little plain, while he signed for those he conducted to continue their assent. As each mule passed, it received a blow or a kick from the impatient guide, who did not seem to think it necessary to be very ceremonious with the poor beasts, and had taken this simple method to give a general and a brisker impulsion to the party. The expedient was so natural, and so much in accordance with the practice of the muleteers and others of their class, that it excited no suspicion in most of the travellers, who pursued their way, either meditating on and enjoying the novel and profound emotions that their present situation so naturally awakened, or discoursing lightly, in the manner of the thoughtless and unconcerned. The Signor Grimaldi alone, whose watchfulness had already been quickened by previous distrust, took heed of the movement. When all had passed, the Genoese turned in his saddle, and cast an apparently careless look behind. But the glance in truth was anxious and keen. Pierre stood looking steadily at the heavens, one hand holding his hat, and the other extended with an open palm. A glittering particle descended to the latter, when the guide instantly resumed his place in advance. As he passed the Italian, however, meeting an inquiring look, he permitted the other to see a snow-drop so thoroughly congealed, as to have not yet melted with the natural heat of his skin. The eye of Pierre appeared to impose discretion on his confidant, and the silent communion escaped the observation of the rest of the travellers. Just at this moment, too, the attention of the others was luckily called to a different object, by a cry from one of the muleteers, of whom there were three as assistants to the guide. He pointed out a party which, like themselves, was holding the direction of the Col. There was a solitary individual mounted on a mule, and a single pedestrian, without any guide, or other traveller, in their company. Their movements were swift, and they had not been more than a minute in view, before they disappeared behind an angle of the crags which nearly closed the valley on the side of the convent, and which was the precise spot already mentioned as being so dangerous in the season of the melting snows.

"Dost thou know the quality and object of the travellers before us?" demanded the Baron de Willading, of Pierre.

The latter mused. It was evident he did not expect to meet with strangers in that particular part of the passage.

"We can know little of those who come from the convent, though few would be apt to leave so safe a roof at this late hour," he answered; "but, until I saw yonder travellers with my own eyes, I could have sworn there were none on this side of the Col going the same way as ourselves! It is time that all the others were already arrived."

"They are villagers of St. Pierre, going up with supplies," observed one of the muleteers. "None bound to Italy have passed Liddes since the party of Pippo, and they by this time should be well housed at the hospice. Didst not see a dog among them?—'twas one of the Augustines' mastiffs."

"'Twas the dog I noted, and it was on account of his appearance that I spoke," returned the Baron. "The animal had the air of an old acquaintance, Gaetano, for to me it seemed to resemble our tried friend Nettuno; and he at whose heels he kept so close wore much the air of our acquaintance of the Leman, the bold and ready Maso."

"Who has gone unrequited for his eminent services!" answered the Genoese, thoughtfully. "The extraordinary refusal of that man to receive our money is quite as wonderful as any other part of his unusual and inexplicable conduct. I would he had been less obstinate or less proud, for the unrequited obligation rests like a load upon my spirits."

"Thou art wrong. I employed our young friend Sigismund secretly on this duty, while we were receiving the greetings of Roger de Blonay and the good bailiff, but thy countryman treated the escape lightly, as the mariner is apt to consider past danger, and he would listen to no offer of protection or gold. I was, therefore, more displeased than surprised

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by what thou hast well enough termed obstinacy."

"'Tell your employers,' he said," added Sigismund, "'that they may thank the saints, Our Lady, or Brother Luther, as best suits their habits, but that they had better forget that such a man as Maso lives. His acquaintance can bring them neither honor nor advantage. Tell this especially to the Signor Grimaldi, when you are on your journey to Italy, and we have parted forever, as on my suggestion.' This was said to me in the interview I held with the brave fellow after his liberation from prison."

"The answer was remarkable for a man of his condition, and the especial message to myself of singular exception. I observed that his eye was often on me with peculiar meaning, during the passage of the lake, and to this hour I have not been able to explain the motive!"

"Is the signor of Genoa?" asked the guide: "or is he, by chance, in any way connected with her authorities?"

"Of that republic and city, and certainly of some little interest with the authorities," answered the Italian, a slight smile curling his lip, as he glanced a look at his friend.

"It is not necessary to look further for Maso's acquaintance with your features," returned Pierre, laughing; "for of all who live in Italy, there is not a man who has more frequent occasions to know the authorities; but we linger in this gossip. Urge the beasts upward, Etienne—presto! presto!"

The muleteers answered this appeal by one of their long cries, which has a resemblance to the rattling that is the well-known signal of the venomous serpent of this country, when he would admonish the traveller to move quickly, and which certainly produces the same startling effect on the nerves of the mule as the signal of the snake is very apt to excite in man. This interruption caused the dialogue to be dropped, all riding onward, musing in their several fashions on what had just passed. In a few minutes the party turned the crag in question, and, quitting the valley, or sterile basin, in which they had been journeying for the last half hour, they entered by a narrow gorge into a scene that resembled a crude collection of the materials of which the foundations of the world had been originally formed. There was no longer any vegetation at all, or if here and there a blade of grass had put forth under the shelter of some stone, it was so meagre, and of so rare occurrence, as to be unnoticed in that sublime scene of chaotic confusion. Ferruginous, streaked, naked, and cheerless rocks arose around them, and even that snowy beacon, the glowing summit of Velan, which had so long lain bright and cheering on their path, was now hid entirely from view. Pierre Dumont soon after pointed out a place on the visible summit of the monutain, where a gorge between the neighboring peaks admitted a view of the heavens beyond. This he informed those he guided was the Col, through whose opening the pile of the Alps was to be finally surmounted. The light that still tranquilly reigned in this part of the heavens was in sublime contrast to the gathering gloom of the passes below, and all hailed this first glimpse of the end of their day's toil as a harbinger of rest, and we might add of security; for, although none but the Signor Grimaldi had detected the secret uneasiness of Pierre, it was not possible to be, at that late hour, amid so wild and dreary a display of desolation, and, as it were, cut off from communion with their kind, without experiencing an humbling sense of the dependence of man upon the grand and ceaseless Providence of God.

The mules were again urged to increase their pace, and images of the refreshment and repose that were expected from the convent's hospitality became general and grateful among the travellers. The day was fast disappearing from the glens and ravines through which they rode, and all discourse ceased in the desire to get on. The exceeding purity of the atmosphere, which, at that great elevation, resembled a medium of thought rather than of matter, rendered objects defined, just, and clear; and none but the mountaineers and Sigismund, who were used to the deception (for in effect truth obtains this character with those who have been accustomed to the false), and who understood the grandeur of the scale on which nature has displayed her power among the Alps, knew how to calculate the distance which still separated them from their goal. More than a league of painful and stony ascent was

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to be surmounted, and yet Adelheid and Christine had both permitted slight exclamations of pleasure to escape them, when Pierre pointed to the speck of blue sky between the hoary pinnacles above, and first gave them to understand that it denoted the position of the convent. Here and there, too, small patches of the last year's snow were discovered, lying under the shadows of overhanging rocks, and which were likely to resist the powers of the sun till winter came again; another certain sign that they had reached a height greatly exceeding that of the usual habitations of men. The keenness of the air was another proof of their situation, for all the travellers had heard that the Augustines dwelt among eternal frosts, a report which is nearly literally true.

At no time during the day had the industry of the party been as great as it now became. In this respect, the ordinary traveller is apt to resemble him who journeys on the great highway of life, and who finds himself obliged, by a tardy and ill-requited diligence in age, to repair those omissions and negligences of youth which would have rendered the end of his toil easy and profitable. Improved as their speed had become, it continued to increase rather than to diminish, for Pierre Dumont kept his eye riveted on the heavens, and each moment of time seemed to bring new incentives to exertion. The wearied beasts manifested less zeal than the guide, and they who rode them were beginning to murmur at the unreasonableness of the rate at which they were compelled to proceed on the narrow, uneven, stony path, where footing for the animals was not always obtained with the necessary quickness, when a gloom deeper than that cast by the shadows of the rock fell upon their track, and the air filled with snow as suddenly as if all its particles had been formed and condensed by the application of some prompt chemical process.

The change was so unexpected, and yet so complete, that the whole party checked their mules, and sat looking up at the millions of flakes that were descending on their heads, with more wonder and admiration than fear. A shout from Pierre first aroused them from this trance, and recalled them to a sense of the real state of things. He was standing on a knoll, already separated from the party by some fifty yards, white with snow, and gesticulating violently for the travellers to come on.

"For the sake of the blessed Maria! quicken the beasts," he cried; for Pierre, like most who dwelt in Valais, was a Catholic, and one accustomed to bethink him most of his heavenly mediator when most oppressed with present dangers; "quicken their speed, if you value your lives! This is no moment to gaze at the mountains, which are well enough in their way, and no doubt both the finest and largest known" (no Swiss ever seriously vituperates or loses his profound veneration for his beloved nature), "but which had better be the humblest plain on earth for our occasions than what they truly are. Quicken the mules, then, for the love of the Blessed Virgin!"

"Thou betrayest unnecessary, and, for one that had needs be cool, indiscreet alarm, at the appearance of a little snow, friend Pierre," observed the Signor Grimaldi, as the mules drew near the guide, and speaking with a little of the irony of a soldier who had steeled his nerves by familiarity with danger. "Even we Italians, though less used to the frosts than you of the mountains, are not so much disturbed by the change as thou, a trained guide of St. Bernard!"

"Reproach me as you will, signor," said Pierre, turning and pursuing his way with increased diligence, though he did not entirely succeed in concealing his resentment at an accusation which he knew to be unmerited, "but quicken your pace, until you are better acquainted with the country in which you journey—your words pass for empty breath in my ears. This is no trifle of a cloak doubled about the person, or of balls rolled into piles by the sport of children, but an affair of life or death. You are a half league in the air, Signor Genoese, in the region of storms, where the winds work their will, at times, as if infernal devils were rioting to cool themselves, and where the stoutest limbs and the firmest hearts are brought but too often to see and confess their feebleness!"

The old man had uncovered his blanched locks in respect to the Italian, as he uttered this energetic remonstrance, and when he

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ended, he walked on in professional pride, as if disdaining to protect a brow that had already weathered so many tempests among the mountains.

"Cover thyself, good Pierre, I pray thee," urged the Genoese in a tone of repentance. "I have shown the intemperance of a boy, and intemperance of a quality that little becomes my years. Thou art the best judge of the circumstances in which we are placed, and thou alone shalt lead us."

Pierre accepted the apology with a manly but respectful reverence, continuing always to ascend with unremitted industry.

Ten gloomy and anxious minutes succeeded. During this time, the falling snows came faster and faster and in finer flakes, while, occasionally, there were fearful intimations that the winds were about to rise. At the elevation in which the travellers now found themselves, phenomena, that would ordinarily be of little account, become the arbiters of fate. The escape of the caloric from the human system, at the height of six or seven thousand feet above the sea, and in the latitude of forty-six, is, under the most favorable circumstances, frequently of itself the source of inconvenience; but here were grave additional reasons to heighten the danger. The absence of the sun's rays alone left a sense of chilling cold, and a few hours of night were certain to bring frost, even at midsummer. Thus it is that storms of trifling import in themselves, gain power over the human frame by its reduced means of resistance, and when to this fact is added the knowledge that the elements are far fiercer in their workings in the upper than in the nether regions of the earth, the motives of Pierre's concern will be better understood by the reader than they probably were by himself, though the honest guide had a long and severe experience to supply the place of theory.

Men are rarely loquacious in danger. The timid recoil into themselves, yielding most of their faculties to a tormenting imagination, that augments the causes of alarm and diminishes the means of security, while the firm of mind rally and condense their powers to the point necessary to exertion. Such were the effects in the present instance on those who followed Pierre. A general and deep silence pervaded the party, each one seeing their situation in the colors most suited to his particular habits and character. The men, without an exception, were grave and earnest in their efforts to force the mules forward; Adelheid became pale, but she preserved her calmness by the sheer force of character; Christine was trembling and dependent, though cheered by the presence of, and her confidence in Sigismund; while the attendants of the heiress of Willading covered their heads, and followed their mistress with the blind faith in their superiors that is apt to sustain people of their class in serious emergencies.

Ten minutes sufficed entirely to change the aspect of the view. The frozen element could not adhere to the iron-like and perpendicular faces of the mountains, but the glens, and ravines, and valleys became as white as the peak of Velan. Still Pierre continued his silent and upward march, in a way to keep alive a species of trembling hope among those who depended so helplessly upon his intelligence and faith. They wished to believe that the snow was merely one of those common occurrences that were to be expected on the summits of the Alps at this late season of the year, and which were no more than so many symptoms of the known rigor of the approaching winter. The guide himself was evidently disposed to lose no time in explanation, and as the secret excitement stole over all his followers he no longer had cause to complain of the tardiness of their movements. Sigismund kept near his sister and Adelheid, having a care that their mules did not lag, while the other males performed the same necessary office for the beasts ridden by the female domestics. In this manner passed the few sombre minutes which immediately preceded the disappearance of day. The heavens were no longer visible. In that direction the eye saw only an endless succession of falling flakes, and it was getting to be difficult to distinguish even the ramparts of rock that bounded the irregular ravine in which they rode. They were known to be, however, at no great distance from the path, which indeed occasionally brushed their sides. At other moments they crossed rude, stony, mountain heaths, if such a word can be applied to spots without the symbol or hope of vegetation. The traces of the beasts that

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had preceded them became less and less apparent, though the trickling stream that came down from the glaciers, and along which they had now journeyed for hours, was occasionally seen, as it was crossed in pursuing their winding way. Pierre, though still confident that he held the true direction, alone knew that this guide was not long to be relied on; for, as they drew nearer to the top of the mountains, the torrent gradually lessened both in its force and in the volume of its water, separating into twenty small rills, which came rippling from the vast bodies of snow that lay among the different peaks above.

As yet there had been no wind. The guide, as minute after minute passed without bringing any change in this respect, ventured at last to advert to the fact, cheering his companions by giving them reason to hope that they should yet reach the convent without any serious calamity. As if in mockery of this opinion, the flakes of snow began to whirl in the air while the words were on his lips, and a blast came through the ravine, that set the protection of cloaks and mantels at defiance. Notwithstanding his resolution and experience, the stout-hearted Pierre suffered an exclamation of despair to escape him, and he instantly stopped, in the manner of a man who could no longer conceal the dread that had been collecting in his bosom for the last interminable and weary hour. Sigismund, as well as most of the men of the party, had dismounted a little previously, with a view to excite warmth by exercise. The youth had often traversed the mountains, and the cry no sooner reached his ear, than he was at the side of him who uttered it.

"At what distance are we still from the convent?" he demanded eagerly.

"There is more than a league of steep and stony path to mount, Monsieur le Capitaine," returned the disconsolate Pierre, in a tone that perhaps said more than his words.

"This is not a moment for indecision. Remember that thou art not the leader of a party of carriers with their beasts of burden, but that there are those with us who are unused to exposure, and are feeble of body. What is the distance from the last hamlet we passed?"

"Double that to the convent!"

Sigismund turned, and with the eye he made a silent appeal to the two old nobles, as if to ask for advice or orders.

"It might indeed be better to return," observed the Signor Grimaldi, in the way one utters a half-formed resolution. "This wind is getting to be piercingly cutting, and the night is hard upon us. What thinkest thou, Melchior; for, with Monsieur Sigismund, I am of opinion that there is little time to lose."

"Signor, your pardon," hastily interrupted the guide. "I would not undertake to cross the plain of the Velan, an hour later, for all the treasures of Einsiedeln and Loretto! The wind will have an infernal sweep in that basin, which will soon be boiling like a pot, while here we shall get, from time to time, the shelter of the rocks. The slightest mishap on the open ground might lead us astray a league or more, and it would need an hour to regain the course. The beasts too mount faster than they descend, and with far more surety in the dark; and even when at the village there is nothing fit for nobles, while the brave monks have all that a king can need."

"Those who escape from these wild rocks need not be critical about their fare, honest Pierre, when fairly housed. Wilt thou answer for our arrival at the convent unharmed, and in reasonable time?"

"Signor, we are in the hands of God. The pious Augustines, I make no doubt, are praying for all who are on the mountain at this moment; but there is not a minute to lose. I ask no more than that none lose sight of their companions, and that each exert his force to the utmost. We are not far from the House of Refuge, and should the storm increase to a tempest, as, to conceal the danger no longer, well may happen in this late month, we will seek its shelter for a few hours."

This intelligence was happily communicated, for the certainty that there was a place of safety within an attainable distance, had some such cheering effect on the travellers as is produced on the mariner who finds that the hazards of the gale are lessened by the accidental position of a secure harbor under his lee. Repeating his admonitions for the party to keep as close together as

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possible, and advising all who felt the sinister effects of the cold on their limbs to dismount, and to endeavor to restore the circulation by exercise, Pierre resumed his route.

But even the time consumed in this short conference had sensibly altered the condition of things for the worse. The wind, which had no fixed direction, being a furious current of the upper air diverted from its true course by encountering the ragged peaks and ravines of the Alps, was now whirling around them in eddies, now aiding their ascent by seeming to push against their backs, and then returning in their faces with a violence that actually rendered advance impossible. The temperature fell rapidly several degrees, and the most vigorous of the party began to perceive the benumbing influence of the chilling currents, at their lower extremities especially, in a manner to excite serious alarm. Every precaution was used to protect the females that tenderness could suggest; but though Adelheid, who alone retained sufficient self-command to give an account of their feelings, diminished the danger of their situation with the wish not to alarm any of their companions uselessly, she could not conceal from herself the horrible truth that the vital heat was escaping from her own body with a rapidity that rendered it impossible for her much longer to retain the use of her faculties. Conscious of her own mental superiority over that of all her female companions, a superiority which in such moments is even of more account than bodily force, after a few minutes of silent endurance, she checked her mule, and called upon Sigismund to examine the condition of his sister and her maids, neither of whom had now spoken for some time.

This startling request was made at a moment when the storm appeared to gather new force, and when it had become absolutely impossible to distinguish even the whitened earth at twenty paces from the spot where the party stood collected in a shivering group. The young soldier threw open the cloaks and mantles in which Christine was enveloped, and the half unconscious girl sank on his shoulder, like a drowsy infant that was willing to seek its slumbers in the arms of one it loved.

"Christine!—my sister, my poor, my much-abused, angelic sister!" murmured Sigismund, happily for his secret in a voice that only reached the ears of Adelheid. "Awake, Christine! for the love of our excellent and affectionate mother, exert thyself. Awake, Christine! in the name of God, awake!"

"Awake, dearest Christine!" exclaimed Adelheid, throwing herself from the saddle, and folding the smiling but benumbed girl to her bosom. "God protect me from the pang of feeling that thy loss should be owing to my wish to lead thee amid these cruel and inhospitable rocks! Christine, if thou hast love and pity for me, awake!"

"Look to the maids!" hurriedly said Pierre, who found that he was fast touching on one of those mountain catastrophes, of which, in the course of his life, he had been the witness of a few of fearful consequences. "Look to all the females, for he who now sleeps, dies!"

The muleteers soon stripped the two domestics of their outer coverings, and it was immediately proclaimed that both were in imminent danger, one having already lost all consciousness. A timely application of the flask of Pierre, and the efforts of the muleteers, succeeded in so far restoring life as to remove the grounds of immediate apprehension; though it was apparent to the least instructed of them all, that half an hour more of exposure would probably complete the fatal work that had so actively and vigorously commenced. To add to the horror of this conviction, each member of the party, not excepting the muleteers, was painfully conscious of the escape of that vital warmth whose total flight was death.

In this strait all dismounted. They felt that the occasion was one of extreme jeopardy, that nothing could save them but resolution, and that every minute of time was getting to be of the last importance. Each female, Adelheid included, was placed between two of the other sex, and, supported in this manner, Pierre called loudly and in a manful voice for the whole to proceed. The beasts were driven after them by one of the muleteers. The progress of travellers, feeble as Adelheid and her companions, on a stony path of very uneven surface, and of a steep ascent, the snow covering the feet, and the

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tempest cutting their faces, was necessarily slow, and to the last degree toilsome. Still, the exertions increased the quickness of the blood, and, for a short time, there was an appearance of recalling those who most suffered to life. Pierre, who still kept his post with the hardihood of a mountaineer and the fidelity of a Swiss, cheered them on with his voice, continuing to raise the hope that the place of refuge was at hand.

At this instant, when exertion was most needed, and when, apparently, all were sensible of its importance and most disposed to make it, the muleteer charged with the duty of urging on the line of beasts deserted his trust, preferring to take his chance of regaining the village by descending the mountain, to struggle uselessly, and at a pace so slow, to reach the convent. The man was a stranger in the country, who had been adventitiously employed for this expedition, and was unconnected with Pierre, by any of those ties which are the best pledges of unconquerable faith, when the interests of self press hard upon our weaknesses. The wearied beasts, no longer driven, and indisposed to toil, first stopped, then turned aside to avoid the cutting air and the ascent, and were soon wandering from the path it was so vitally necessary to keep.

As soon as Pierre was informed of the circumstances, he eagerly issued an order to collect the stragglers without delay, and at every hazard. Benumbed, bewildered, and unable to see beyond a few yards, this embarrassing duty was not easily performed. One after another of the party joined in the pursuit, for all the effects of the travellers were on the beasts; and after some ten minutes of delay, blended with an excitement which helped to quicken the blood and awaken the faculties of even the females, the mules were all happily regained. They were secured to each other head and tail, in the manner so usual in the droves of these animals, and Pierre turned to resume the order of the march. But on seeking the path, it was not to be found! Search was made on every side, and yet none could meet with the smallest of its traces. Broken, rough fragments of rock were all that rewarded the most anxious investigation; and after a few precious minutes uselessly wasted, they all assembled around the guide, as if by common consent, to seek his counsel. The truth was no longer to be concealed—the party was lost.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"Let no presuming railer tax
Creative wisdom, as if aught was formed
In vain, or not for admirable ends."—THOMSON.

So long as we possess the power to struggle, hope is the last feeling to desert the human mind. Men are endowed with every gradation of courage, from the calm energy of reflection, which is rendered still more effective by physical firmness, to the headlong precipitation of reckless spirit; from the resolution that grows more imposing and more respectable, as there is greater occasion for its exercise, to the fearful and ill-directed energies of despair. But no description with the pen can give the reader a just idea of the chill that comes over the heart when accidental causes rob us, suddenly and without notice, of those resources on which we have been habitually accustomed to rely. The mariner, without his course or compass, loses his audacity and coolness, though the momentary danger be the same; the soldier will fly, if you deprive him of his arms; and the hunter of our own forests who has lost his own landmarks, is transformed from the bold and determined foe of its tenants, into an anxious and dependent fugitive, timidly seeking the means of retreat. In short, the customary associations of the mind being rudely and suddenly destroyed, we are made to feel that reason, while it elevates us so far above the brutes to make man their lord and governor, becomes a quality less valuable than instinct, when the connecting link in its train of causes and effects is severed.

It was no more than a natural consequence of his greater experience, that Pierre Dumont understood the horrors of their present situation far better than any with him. It is true, there yet remained enough light to enable him to pick his way over the rocks and stones, but he had sufficient experience to understand that there was less risk in remaining stationary than in moving; for

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while there was only one direction that led toward the Refuge, all the rest would conduct them to a greater distance from the shelter, which was now the only hope. On the other hand, a very few minutes of the intense cold, and of the searching wind to which they were exposed, would most probably freeze the currents of life in the feebler of those intrusted to his care.

"Hast thou aught to advise?" asked Melchior de Willading, folding Adelheid to his bosom beneath his ample cloak, and communicating, with a father's love, a small portion of the meagre warmth that still remained in his own aged frame to that of his drooping daughter—"canst thou bethink thee of nothing that may be done in this awful strait?"

"If the good monks have been active——" returned the wavering Pierre. "I fear me that the dogs have not yet been exercised on the paths this season!"

"Has it then come to this? Are our lives indeed dependent on the uncertain sagacity of brutes?"

"Mein Herr, I would bless the Virgin and her holy Son, if it were so! But I fear this storm has been so sudden and unexpected, that we may not even hope for their succor."

Melchior groaned. He folded his child still nearer to his heart, while the athletic Sigismund shielded his drooping sister, as the fowl shelters its young beneath the wing.

"Delay is death," rejoined the Signor Grimaldi. "I have heard of muleteers that have been driven to kill their beasts, that shelter and warmth might be found in their entrails."

"The alternative is horrible!" interrupted Sigismund. "Is return impossible? By always descending, we must, in time, reach the village below."

"That time would be fatal," answered Pierre. "I know of only one resource that remains. If the party will keep together, and answer my shouts, I will make another effort to find the path."

This proposal was gladly accepted, for energy and hope go hand in hand, and the guide was about to quit the group, when he felt the strong grasp of Sigismund on his arm.

"I will be thy companion," said the soldier firmly.

"Thou hast not done me justice, young man," answered Pierre, with severe reproach in his manner. "Had I been base enough to desert my trust, these limbs and this strength are yet sufficient to carry me safely down the mountain; but though a guide of the Alps may freeze like another man, the last throb of his heart will be in behalf of those he serves."

"A thousand pardons, brave old man—a thousand pardons! still will I be thy companion. The search that is conducted by two will be more likely to succeed than that on which thou goest alone."

The offended Pierre, who liked the spirit of the youth as much as he disliked his previous suspicions, met the apology frankly. He extended his hand and forgot the feelings that, even amid the tempests of those wild mountains, were excited by a distrust of his honesty. After this short concession to the ever-burning though smothered volcano of human passion they left the group together, in order to make a last search for their course.

The snow by this time was many inches deep, and as the road was at best but a faint bridle-path that could scarcely be distinguished by day-light from the débris which strewed the ravines, the undertaking would have been utterly hopeless, had not Pierre known that there was the chance of still meeting with some signs of the many mules that daily went up and down the mountain. The guide called to the muleteers, who answered his cries every minute; for so long as they kept within the sound of each other's voices, there was no danger of their becoming entirely separated. But, amid the hollow roaring of the wind, and the incessant pelting of the storm, it was neither safe nor practicable to venture far asunder. Several little stony knolls were ascended and descended, and a rippling rill was found, but without bringing with it any traces of the path. The heart of Pierre began to chill with the decreasing warmth of his body, and the firm old man, overwhelmed with his responsibility, while his truant thoughts would unbidden recur to those whom he had left in his cottage at the foot of the mountain, gave way at last to his emotions in a paroxysm of grief, wringing his hands, weeping and calling loudly on God for succor. This fearful evidence of

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their extremity worked upon the feelings of Sigismund until they were wrought up nearly to frenzy. His great physical force still sustained him, and in an excess of energy that was fearfully allied to madness he rushed forward into the vortex of snow and hail, as if determined to leave all to the Providence of God, disappearing from the eyes of his companion. This incident recalled the guide to his senses. He called earnestly on the thoughtless youth to return. No answer was given, and Pierre hastened back to the motionless and shivering party, in order to unite all their voices in a last effort to be heard. Cry upon cry was raised, but each shout was answered merely by the hoarse rushing of the winds.

"Sigismund! Sigismund!" called one after another in hurried and alarmed succession.

"The noble boy will be irretrievably lost!" exclaimed the Signor Grimaldi in despair, the services already rendered by the youth, together with his manly qualities, having insensibly and closely wound themselves around his heart. "He will die a miserable death, and without the consolation of meeting his fate in communion with his fellow-sufferers!"

A shout from Sigismund came whirling past, as if the sound were embodied in the gale.

"Blessed Ruler of the Earth, this is alone thy mercy!" exclaimed Melchior de Willading—"he has found the path!"

"And honor to thee, Maria—thou mother of God!" murmured the Italian.

At that moment a dog came leaping and barking through the snow. It immediately was scenting and whining among the frozen travellers. The exclamations of joy and surprise were scarcely uttered before Sigismund, accompanied by another, joined the party.

"Honor and thanks to the good Augustines!" cried the delighted guide; "this is the third good office of the kind for which I am their debtor!"

"I would it were true, honest Pierre," answered the stranger. "But Maso and Nettuno are poor substitutes in a tempest like this, for the servants and beasts of St. Bernard. I am a wanderer, and lost like yourselves, and my presence brings little other relief than that which is known to be the fruit of companionship in misery. The saints have brought me a second time into your company when matters were hanging between life and death!"

Maso made this last remark when, by drawing nearer the group, he had been able to ascertain, by the remains of the light, of whom the party was composed.

"If it is to be as useful now as thou hast already been," answered the Genoese, "it will be happier for us all, thyself included. Bethink thee quickly of thy expedients, and I will make thee an equal sharer of all that a generous Providence hath bestowed."

Il Maledetto rarely listened to the voice of the Signor Grimaldi without a manner of interest and curiosity which, as already mentioned, had more than once struck the latter himself, but which he quite naturally attributed to the circumstance of his person being known to one who had declared himself to be a native of Genoa. Even at this terrible moment, the same manner was evident, and the noble, thinking it a favorable symptom, renewed the already neglected offer of fortune, with a view to quicken the zeal which he reasonably enough supposed would be most likely to be awakened by the hopes of a substantial reward.

"Were there question here, illustrious signor," answered Maso, "of steering a barge, of shortening sail, or of handling a craft of any rig or construction, in gale, squall, hurricane, or a calm among breakers, my skill and experience might be turned to good account; but setting aside the difference in our strength and hardihood, even that lily which is in so much danger of being nipped by the frosts is not more helpless than I am myself at this moment. I am no better than yourselves, signori, and, though a better mountaineer, perhaps, I rely on the favor of the saints to be succored, or my time must finish among the snows instead of in the surf of a seashore, as, until now, I had always believed would be my fate."

"But the dog—thy admirable dog?"

"Ah, Eccellenza, Nettuno is but a useless beast, here! God has given him a thicker mantle and a warmer dress than to us Christians, but even this advantage will soon prove a curse to my poor friend. The long hair he carries will quickly be covered with

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The Travelers followed their leader with more confidence, though blindly.—*The Headsman.*

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icicles, and, as the snow deepens, it will retard his movements. The dogs of St. Bernard are smoother, have longer limbs and a truer scent, and possess the advantage of being trained to the paths."

A tremendous shout of Sigismund's interrupted Maso; the youth, on finding that the accidental meeting with the mariner was not likely to lead to any immediate advantages, having instantly, accompanied by Pierre and one of his assistants, renewed the search. The cry was echoed from the guide and the muleteer, and then all three were seen flying through the snow, preceded by a powerful mastiff. Nettuno, who had been crouching with his bushy tail between his legs, barked, seemed to arouse with new courage, and then leaped with evident joy and good-will upon the back of his old antagonist Uberto.

The dog of St. Bernard was alone. But his air and all his actions were those of an animal whose consciousness was wrought up to the highest pitch permitted by the limits nature had set to the intelligence of a brute. He ran from one to another, rubbed his glossy and solid side against the limbs of all, wagged his tail, and betrayed the usual signs that creatures of his species manifest, when their instinct is most alive. Luckily he had a good interpreter of his meaning in the guide, who, knowing the habits, and, if it may be so expressed, the intentions of the mastiff, feeling there was not a moment to lose if they would still preserve the feebler members of their party, begged the others to hasten the necessary dispositions to profit by this happy meeting. The females were supported as before, the mules fastened together, and Pierre, placing himself in front, called cheerfully to the dog, encouraging him to lead the way.

"Is it quite prudent to confide so implicitly to the guidance of this brute?" asked the Signor Grimaldi, a little doubtingly, when he saw the arrangement on which, by the increasing gloom and the growing intensity of the cold, it was but too apparent, even to one as little accustomed to the mountains as himself, that the lives of the whole party depended.

"Fear not to trust to old Uberto, signor," answered Pierre, moving onward as he spoke, for to think of further delay was out of the question; "fear nothing for the faith or the knowledge of the dog. These animals are trained by the servants of the convent to know and keep the paths, even when the snows lie on them fathoms deep. God has given them stout hearts, long limbs, and short hair, expressly, as it has often seemed to me, for this end; and nobly do they use the gifts! I am acquainted with all their ways, for we guides commonly learn the ravines of St. Bernard by first serving the claviers of the convent, and many a day have I gone up and down these rocks with a couple of these animals in training for this very purpose. The father and mother of Uberto were my favorite companions, and their son will hardly play an old friend of the family false."

The travellers followed their leader with more confidence, though blindly. Uberto appeared to perform his duty with the sobriety and steadiness that became his years, and which, indeed, were very necessary for the circumstances in which they were placed. Instead of bounding ahead and becoming lost to view, as most probably would have happened with a younger animal, the noble and half-reasoning brute maintained a pace that was suited to the slow march of those who supported the females, occasionally stopping to look back, as if to make sure that none were left.

The dogs of St Bernard are, or it might perhaps be better to say were,—for it is affirmed that the ancient race is lost,—chosen for their size, their limbs, and the shortness of their coats, as has just been stated by Pierre; the former being necessary to convey the succor with which they were often charged, as well as to overcome the difficulties of the mountains, and the two latter that they might the better wade through, and resist the influence of, the snows. Their training consisted in rendering them familiar with, and attached to, the human race; in teaching them to know and to keep the paths on all occasions, except such as called for a higher exercise of their instinct, and to discover the position of those who had been overwhelmed by the avalanches, and to assist in disinterring their bodies. In all these duties Uberto had been so long exercised, that he was universally known to be the

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most sagacious and the most trusty animal on the mountain. Pierre followed his steps with so much greater reliance on his intelligence, from being perfectly acquainted with the character of the dog. When, therefore, he saw the mastiff turn at right angles to the course he had just been taking, the guide, on reaching the spot, imitated his example, and, first removing the snow to make sure of the fact, he joyfully proclaimed to those who came after him that the lost path was found. This intelligence sounded like a reprieve from death, though the mountaineers well knew that more than an hour of painful and increasing toil was still necessary to reach the hospice. The chilled blood of the tender beings who were fast dropping into the terrible sleep which is the forerunner of death, was quickened in their veins, however, when they heard the shout of delight that spontaneously broke from all their male companions, on learning the glad tidings.

The movement was now faster, though embarrassed and difficult on account of the incessant pelting of the storm and the influence of the biting cold, which were difficult to be withstood by even the strongest of the party. Sigismund groaned inwardly, as he thought of Adelheid and his sister's being exposed to a tempest which shook the stoutest frame and the most manly heart among them. He encircled the latter with an arm, rather carrying than leading her along, for the young soldier had sufficient knowledge of the localities of the mountain to understand that they were still at a fearful distance from the Col and that the strength of Christine was absolutely unequal to the task of reaching it unsupported.

Occasionally Pierre spoke to the dogs, Nettuno keeping close to the side of Uberto in order to prevent separation, since the path was no longer discernible without constant examination, the darkness having so far increased as to reduce the sight to very narrow limits. Each time the name of the latter was pronounced, the animal would stop, wag his tail or give some other sign of recognition, as if to reassure his followers of his intelligence and fidelity. After one of these short halts, old Uberto and his companion unexpectedly refused to proceed. The guide, the two old nobles, and at length the whole party, were around them, and no cry or encouragement of the mountaineers could induce the dogs to quit their tracks.

"Are we again lost?" asked the Baron de Willading, pressing Adelheid closer to his beating heart, nearly ready to submit to their common fate in despair. "Has God at length forsaken us?—my daughter—my beloved child!"

This touching appeal was answered by a howl from Uberto, who leaped madly away and disappeared. Nettuno followed, barking wildly and with a deep throat. Pierre did not hesitate about following, and Sigismund, believing that the movement of the guide was to arrest the flight of the dogs, was quickly on his heels. Maso moved with greater deliberation.

"Nettuno is not apt to raise that bark with nothing but hail, and snow, and wind in his nostrils," said the calculating Italian. "We are either near another party of travellers, for such are on the mountains as I know——"

"God forbid! Art sure of this?" demanded the Signor Grimaldi, observing that the other had suddenly checked himself.

"Sure that others *were*, signor," returned the mariner deliberately, as if he measured well the meaning of each word. "Ah, here comes the trusty beast, and Pierre, and the captain, with their tidings, be they good or be they evil."

The two just named rejoined their friends as Maso ceased speaking. They hurriedly informed the shivering travellers that the much-desired Refuge was near, and that nothing but the darkness and the driving snow prevented it from being seen.

"It was a blessed thought, and one that came from St. Augustine himself, which led the holy monks to raise this shelter!" exclaimed the delighted Pierre, no longer considering it necessary to conceal the extent of the danger they had run. "I would not answer even for my own power to reach the hospice in a time like this. You are of Mother Church, signor, being of Italy?"

"I am one of her unworthy children," returned the Genoese.

"This unmerited favor must have come from the prayers of St. Augustine, and a vow I made to send a fair offering to our Lady of Einsiedeln; for never before have I known a

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dog of St. Bernard lead the traveller to the Refuge! Their business is to find the frozen, and to guide the traveller along the paths to the hospice. Even Uberto had his doubts, as you saw, but the vow prevailed; or, I know not—it might, indeed, have been the prayer."

The Signor Grimaldi was too eager to get Adelheid under cover, and, in good sooth, to be there himself, to waste the time in discussing the knotty point of which of two means, that were equally orthodox, had been the most efficacious in bringing about their rescue. In common with the others, he followed the pious and confiding Pierre in silence, making the best of his way after the credulous guide. The latter had not yet seen the Refuge himself, for so these places are well termed on the Alpine passes, but the formation of the ground had satisfied him of its proximity. Once reassured as to his precise position, all the surrounding localities presented themselves to his mind with the familiarity the seaman manifests with every cord in the intricate maze of his rigging, and in the darkest night, or, to produce a parallel of more common use, with the readiness which all manifest in the intricacies of their own habitations. The broken chain of association being repaired and joined, everything became clear again to his apprehension, and, in diverging from the path on this occasion, the old man held his way as directly toward the spot he sought, as if he were journeying under a bright sun. There was a rough but short descent, a similar rise, and the long-desired goal was reached.

We shall not stop to dwell upon the emotions with which the travellers first touched this place of comparative security. Humility, and dependence on the providence of God, were the predominant sensations even with the rude muleteers, while the nearly exhausted females were just able to express in murmurs their fervent gratitude to the omnipotent power that had permitted its agents so unexpectedly to interpose between them and death. The Refuge was not seen until Pierre laid his hand on the roof, now white with snow, and proclaimed its character with a loud, warm, and devout thanksgiving.

"Enter, and thank God!" he said. "Another hopeless half hour would have brought down from his pride the stoutest among us —enter, and thank God!"

As is the fact with all the edifices of that region, the building was entirely of stone, even to the roof, having the form of those vaulted cellars which in this country are used for the preservation of vegetables. It was quite free from humidity, however, the clearness of the atmosphere and the entire absence of soil preventing the accumulation of moisture, and it offered no more than the naked protection of its walls to those who sought its cover. But shelter on such a night was everything, and this it effectually afforded. The place had only one outlet, being simply formed of four walls and the roof; but it was sufficiently large to shelter a party twice as numerous as that which had now reached it.

The transition from the biting cold and piercing winds of the mountain to the shelter of this inartificial building, was so great as to produce something like a general sensation of warmth. The advantage gained in this change of feeling was judiciously improved by the application of friction and of restoratives under the direction of Pierre. Uberto carried a small supply of the latter attached to his collar, and before half an hour had passed, Adelheid and Christine were sleeping sweetly, side by side, muffled in plenty of spare garments, and pillowed on the saddles and housings of the mules. The brutes were brought within the Refuge, and as no party mounted the St. Bernard without carrying the provender necessary for its beasts of burden, that sterile region affording none of its own, the very fuel being transported leagues on the backs of mules, the patient and hardy animals, too, found their solace, after the fatigues and exposure of the day. The presence of so many living bodies in lodgings so confined aided in producing warmth, and, after all had eaten of the scanty fare furnished by the foresight of the guide, drowsiness came over the whole party.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"Side by side,
Within they lie, a mournful company."—ROGERS.

THE sleep of the weary is sweet. In after-life, Adelheid, when dwelling in a palace, reposing on down, and canopied by the rich

stuffs of a more generous climate, was often heard to say that she had never taken rest grateful as that she found in the Refuge of St. Bernard. So easy, natural, and refreshing had been her slumbers, unalloyed even by those dreams of precipices and avalanches which long afterward haunted her slumbers, that she was the first to open her eyes on the following morning, awakening like an infant that had enjoyed a quiet and healthful repose. Her movements aroused Christine. They threw aside the cloaks and coats that covered them, and sat gazing about the place in the confusion that the novelty of their situation would be likely to produce. All the rest of the travellers still slumbered; and, arising without noise, they passed the silent and insensible sleepers, the quiet mules which had stretched themselves near the entrance of the place, and quitted the hut.

Without, the scene was wintry; but, as is usual in the Alps, let what may be the season, its features of grand and imposing sublimity were prominent. The day was among the peaks above them, while the shades of night still lay upon the valleys, forming a landscape like that exquisite and poetical picture of the lower world, which Guido has given in the celebrated al-fresco painting of Aurora. The ravines and glens were covered with snow, but the sides of the rugged rocks were bare in their eternal hue of ferruginous brown. The little knoll on which the Refuge stood was also nearly naked, the wind having driven the light particles of the snow into the ravine of the path. The air of the morning is keen at that great height even in midsummer, and the shivering girls drew their mantles about them, though they breathed the clear, elastic, inspiring element with pleasure. The storm was entirely past, and the pure sapphire-colored sky was in lovely contrast with the shadows beneath, raising their thoughts naturally to that heaven which shone in a peace and glory so much in harmony with the ordinary images we shadow forth of the abode of the blessed. Adelheid pressed the hand of Christine, and they knelt together, bowing their heads to a rock. As fervent, pure, and sincere orisons ascended to God, from these pious and innocent spirits, as it belongs to poor mortality to offer.

This general, and in their peculiar situation especial, duty performed, the gentle girls felt more assured. Relieved of a heavy and imperative obligation, they ventured to look about them with greater confidence. Another building, similar in form and material to that in which their companions were still sleeping, stood on the same swell of rock, and their first inquiries naturally took that direction. The entrance, or outlet to this hut, was an orifice that resembled a window rather than a door. They moved cautiously to the spot, looking into the gloomy, cavern-like room, as timidly as the hare throws his regards about him before he ventures from his cover. Four human forms were reposing deep in the vault, with their backs sustained against the walls. They slept profoundly, too, for the curious but startled girls gazed at them long, and retired without causing them to awake.

"We have not been alone on the mountain in this terrible night," whispered Adelheid, gently urging the trembling Christine away from the spot; "thou seest that other travellers have been taking their rest near us; most probably after perils and fatigues like our own."

Christine drew closer to the side of her more experienced friend, like the young of the dove hovering near the mother-bird when first venturing from the nest, and they returned to the refuge they had quitted, for the cold was still so intense as to render its protection grateful. At the door they were met by Pierre, the vigilant old man having awakened as soon as the light crossed his eyes.

"We are not alone here," said Adelheid, pointing to the other stone-covered roof—"there are travellers sleeping in yonder building, too."

"Their sleep will be long, lady," answered the guide, shaking his head solemnly. "With two of them it has already lasted a twelvemonth, and the third has slept where you saw him since the fall of the avalanche in the last two days of April."

Adelheid recoiled a step, for his meaning was too plain to be misunderstood. After looking at her gentle companion, she demanded if those they had seen were in truth the bodies of travellers who had perished on the mountain.

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"Of no other, lady," returned Pierre. "This hut is for the living—that for the dead. So near are the two to each other, when men journey on these wild rocks in winter. I have known him who passed a short and troubled night here, begin a sleep in the other before the turn of the day that is not only deep enough, but which will last forever. One of the three that thou hast seen was a guide like myself; he was buried in the falling snow at the spot where the path leaves the plain of Velan below us. Another is a pilgrim that perished in as clear a night as ever shone on St. Bernard, and merely for having taken a cup too much to cheer his way. The third is a poor vine-dresser that was coming from Piedmont into our Swiss valleys to follow his calling, when death overtook him in an ill-advised slumber, in which he was so unwise as to indulge at nightfall. I found his body myself on that naked rock, the day after we had drunk together in friendship at Aoste, and with my own hands was he placed among the others."

"And such is the burial a Christian gets in this inhospitable country!"

"What would you, lady?—'tis the chance of the poor and the unknown. Those that have friends are sought and found; but those that die without leaving traces of their origin fare as you see. The spade is useless among these rocks; and then it is better that the body should remain where it may be seen and claimed, than that it should be put out of sight. The good fathers, and all of note, are taken down into the valleys, where there is earth, and are decently buried; while the poor and the stranger are housed in this vault, which is a better cover than many of them knew while living. Aye, there are three Christians there, who were all lately walking the earth in the flesh, gay and active as any."

"The bodies are four in number!"

Pierre looked surprised; he mused a little, and continued his employment.

"Then another has perished. The time may come when my own blood shall freeze. This is a fate the guide must ever keep in mind, for he is exposed to it at an hour and a season that he knows not!"

Adelheid pursued the subject no further. She remembered to have heard that the pure atmosphere of the mountain prevented that offensive decay which is usually associated with the idea of death, and the usage lost some of its horror in the recollection.

In the meantime the remainder of the party awoke, and were collecting before the Refuge. The mules were led forth and saddled, the baggage was loaded, and Pierre was calling upon the travellers to mount, when Uberto and Nettuno came leaping down the path in company, running side by side in excellent fellowship. The movements of the dogs were of a nature to attract the attention of Pierre and the muleteers, who predicted that they should soon see some of the servants of the Hospice. The result showed the familiarity of the guide with his duty, for he had scarce ventured this opinion, when a party from the gorge on the summit of the mountain was seen wading through the snow, along the path that led toward the Refuge, with Father Xavier at its head.

The explanations were brief and natural. After conducting the travellers to the shelter, and passing most of the night in their company, at the approach of dawn Uberto had returned to the convent, always attended by his friend Nettuno. Here he communicated to the monks, by signs which they who were accustomed to the habits of the animal were not slow in interpreting, that travellers were on the mountain. The good clavier knew that the party of the Baron de Willading was about to cross the Col, for he had hurried home to be in readiness to receive them; and foreseeing the probability that they had been overtaken by the storm of the previous night, he was foremost in joining the servants who went forth to their succor. The little flask of cordial, too, had been removed from the collar of Uberto, leaving no doubt of its contents having been used; and, as nothing was more probable than that the travellers should seek a cover, their steps were directed toward the Refuge as a matter of course.

The worthy clavier made this explanation with eyes that glistened with moisture, occasionally interrupting himself to murmur a prayer of thanksgiving. He passed from one of the party to the other, not even neglecting the muleteers, examining their limbs, and more especially their ears, to see that they had quite escaped the influence of the frost,

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and was only happy when assured by his own observation that the terrible danger they had run was not likely to be attended by any injurious consequences.

"We are accustomed to see many accidents of this nature," he said, smilingly, when the examination was satisfactorily ended, "and practice has made us quick of sight in these matters. The blessed Maria be praised, and adoration to her holy Son, that you have all got through the night so well! There is a warm breakfast in readiness in the convent kitchen, and, one solemn duty performed, we will go up the rocks to enjoy it. The little building near us is the last earthly abode of those who perish on this side the mountain, and whose remains are unclaimed. None of our canons pass the spot without offering a prayer in behalf of their souls. Kneel with me, then, you that have so much reason to be grateful to God, and join in the petition."

Father Xavier knelt on the rocks, and all the Catholics of the party united with him in the prayer for the dead. The Baron de Willading, his daughter and their attendants stood uncovered the while, for though their Protestant opinions rejected such a mediation as useless, they deeply felt the solemnity and holy character of the sacrifice. The clavier arose with a countenance that was beaming and bright as the morning sun, which just at that moment appeared above the summits of the Alps, casting its genial and bland warmth on the group, the brown huts, and the mountain-side.

"Thou art a heretic," he said affectionately to Adelheid, in whom he felt the interest to which her youth and beauty, and the great danger they had so lately run in company, very naturally gave birth. "Thou art an impenitent heretic, but we will not cast thee off; notwithstanding thy obstinacy and crimes, thou seest that the saints can interest themselves in the behalf of obstinate sinners, or thou and all with thee would have surely been lost."

This was said in a way to draw a smile from Adelheid, who received his accusations as so many friendly and playful reproaches. As a token of peace between them, she offered her hand to the monk, with a request that he would aid her in getting into the saddle.

"Dost thou remark the brutes?" said the Signor Grimaldi, pointing to the animals, who were gravely seated before the window of the bone-house, with relaxed jaws, keeping their eyes riveted on its entrance or window. "Thy St. Bernard dogs, father, seem trained to serve a Christian in all ways, whether living or dead."

"Their quiet attitude and decent attention might indeed justify such a remark! Didst thou ever note such conduct in Uberto before?" returned the Augustine, addressing the servants of the convent, for the actions of the animals were a study and a subject of great interest to all of St. Bernard.

"They tell me that another fresh body has been put into the house, since I last came down the mountain," remarked Pierre, who was quietly disposing of a mule in a manner more favorable for Adelheid to mount: "the mastiff scents the dead. It was this that brought him to the Refuge last night, Heaven be praised for the mercy!"

This was said with the indifference that habit is apt to create, for the usage of leaving bodies uninterred had no influence on the feelings of the guide, but it did not the less strike those who had descended from the convent.

"Thou art the last that came down thyself," said one of the servants; "nor have any come up, but those who are now safe in the convent, taking their rest after last night's tempest."

"How canst utter this idle nonsense, Henri, when a fresh body is in the house! This lady counted them but now, and there are four; three was the number that I showed the Piedmontese noble whom I led from Aoste, the day thou meanest."

"So soon! so soon! so suddenly—oh! it is he!"

"Of whom art thou speaking, dear?" demanded the wondering, but not the less awe-struck, Adelheid, believing that the weakened nerves of the poor girl were unstrung by the horror of the spectacle—"it is a traveller like ourselves, that has unhappily perished in the very storm from which, by the kindness of Providence, we have been permitted to escape. Thou shouldst not tremble thus; for fearful as it is, he is in a condition to which we all must come"

Adelheid, alarmed at the violence of

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Christine's feelings, was quite at a loss to account for them, when the relaxed grasp and the dying voice showed that her friend had fainted. Sigismund was one of the first to come to the assistance of his sister, who was soon restored to consciousness by the ordinary applications. In order to effect the cure she was borne to a rock at some little distance from the rest of the party, where none of the other sex presumed to come, with the exception of her brother. The latter stayed but a moment, for a stir in the little party at the bone-house induced him to go thither. His return was slow, thoughtful, and sad.

"The feelings of our poor Christine have been unhinged, and she is too easily excited to undergo the vicissitudes of a journey," observed Adelheid, after having announced the restoration of the sufferer to her senses, "have you seen her thus before?"

"No angel could be more tranquil and happy than my cruelly treated sister was until this last disgrace. You appear ignorant yourself of the melancholy truth?"

Adelheid looked her surprise.

"The dead man is he who was so lately intended to be the master of my sister's happiness, and the wounds on his body leave little doubt that he has been murdered."

The emotion of Christine needed no further explanation.

"Murdered!" repeated Adelheid, in a whisper.

"Of that frightful truth there can be no question. Your father and our friends are now employed in making the examinations which may hereafter be useful in discovering the authors of the deed."

"Sigismund?"

"What wouldst thou, Adelheid?"

"Thou hast felt resentment against this unfortunate man?"

"I deny it not. Could a brother feel otherwise?"

"But now—now that God hath so fearfully visited him?"

"From my soul I forgive him. Had we met in Italy, whither I knew he was going—but this is foolish."

"Worse than that, Sigismund."

"From my inmost soul I pardon him. I never thought him worthy of her whose simple affections were won by the first signs of his pretended interest; but I could not wish him so cruel and sudden an end. May God have mercy on him, at he is pardoned by me."

Adelheid received the silent pressure of the hand which followed with pious satisfaction. They then separated—he to join the group that was collected around the body, and she to take her station again near Christine. The former, however, was met by the Signor Grimaldi, who urged his immediate departure with the females to the convent, promising that the rest of the travellers should follow as soon as the present melancholy duty was ended. As Sigismund had no wish to be a party in what was going on, and there was reason to think his sister would be spared much pain by quitting the spot, he gladly acquiesced in the proposal. Immediate steps were taken for its accomplishment.

Christine mounted her mule in obedience to her brother's desire, quietly, and without remonstrance; but her death-like countenance and fixed eye betrayed the violence of the shock she had received. During the whole of the ride to the convent she spoke not, and, as those around her felt for and understood her distress, the little cavalcade could not have been more melancholy and silent had it borne with it the body of the slain. In an hour they reached the long-sought-for and so anxiously desired place of rest.

While this disposition of the feebler portion of the party was making, a different scene had taken place near what have been already so well called the houses of the living and the dead. As there existed no human habitation within several leagues of the abode of the Augustines on either side of the mountain, and as the paths were much frequented in the summer, the monks exercised a species of civil jurisdiction in such cases as required a prompt exercise of justice, or a necessary respect for those forms that might be important in its administration hereafter before the more regular authorities. It was no sooner known, therefore, that there was reason to suspect an act of violence had been committed, than the good clavier set seriously about taking the necessary steps to authenticate all those circumstances that could be accurately ascertained.

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The identity of the body as that of Jacques Colis, a small but substantial proprietor of the country of Vaud, was quickly established. To this fact not only several of the travellers could testify, but he was also known to one of the muleteers, of whom he had engaged a beast to be left at Aoste, and, it will also be remembered, he had been seen by Pierre at Martigny while making his arrangements to pass the mountain. Of the mule there were no other traces than a few natural signs around the building, but which might equally be attributed to the beasts that still awaited the leisure of the travellers. The manner in which the unhappy man had come by his death, admitted of no dispute. There were several wounds in the body, and a knife, of the sort then much used by travellers of an ordinary class, was left sticking in his back in a position to render it impossible to attribute the end of the sufferer to suicide. The clothes, too, exhibited proofs of a struggle; for they were torn and soiled, but nothing had been taken away. A little gold was found in the pockets, and though in no great plenty, still enough to weaken the first impression that there had also been a robbery.

"This is wonderful," observed the good clavier, as he noted the last circumstance; "the dross which leads so many souls to damnation, has been neglected, while Christian blood has been shed! This seems an act of vengeance rather than of cupidity. Let us now examine if any proofs are to be found of the scene of this tragedy."

The search was unsuccessful. The whole of the surrounding region being composed of ferruginous rocks and their *débris*, it would not, indeed, have been an easy matter to trace the march of an army by their footsteps. The stain of blood, however, was nowhere discoverable, except on the spot where the body had been found. The house itself furnished no particular evidence of the bloody scene of which it had been a witness. The bones of those who had died long before were lying on the stones, it is true, broken and scattered; but, as the curious were wont to stop, and sometimes to enter among and handle these remains of mortality, there was nothing new or peculiar in their present condition.

The interior of the dead-house was obscure, and suited in this particular, at least, to its solemn office. While making the latter part of their examination, the monk and the two nobles, who began to feel a lively interest in the late event, stood before the window, gazing in at the gloomy but instructive scene. One body was so placed as to receive a few of the direct rays of the morning light, and it was consequently much more conspicuous than the rest, though even this was a dark and withered mummy that presented scarcely a vestige of the being it had been. Like all the others whose parts still clung together, it had been placed against the wall, in the attitude of one that is seated, with the head fallen forward. The latter circumstance had brought the blackened and shrivelled face into the line of light. It had the ghastly grin of death, the features being distorted by the process of evaporation, and was altogether a revolting but salutary monitor of the common lot.

"'Tis the body of the poor vine-dresser," remarked the monk, more accustomed to the spectacle than his companions, who had shrunk from the sight; "he unwisely slept on yonder naked rock, and it proved to him the sleep of death. There have been many masses for his soul, but what is left of his material remains still lies unreclaimed. But —how is this! Pierre, thou hast lately passed this place; what was the number of the bodies, at thy last visit?"

"Three, reverend clavier; and yet the ladies spoke of four. I looked for the fourth when in the building, but there appeared none fresh, except this of poor Jacques Colis."

"Come hither, and say if there do not appear to be two in the far corner—here, where the body of thy old comrade the guide was placed, from respect for his calling; surely, there at least is a change in its position."

Pierre approached, and taking off his cap in reverence, he leaned forward in the building, so as to exclude the external light from his eyes.

"Father!" he said, drawing back in surprise, "there is truly another; though I overlooked it when we entered the place."

"This must be examined into! The crime may be greater than we had believed!"

The servants of the convent and Pierre, whose long services rendered him a familiar

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of the brotherhood, now re-entered the building, while those without impatiently awaited the result. A cry from the interior prepared the latter for some fresh subject of horror, when Pierre and his companion quickly reappeared, dragging a living man into the open air. When the light permitted, those who knew him recognized the mild demeanor, the subdued look, and the uneasy, distrustful glance of Balthazar.

The first sensation of the spectators was that of open amazement; but dark suspicion followed. The Baron, the two Genoese, and the monk, had all been witnesses of the scene in the great square of Vévey. The person of the headsman had become so well know to them by the passage on the lake and the event just alluded to, that there was not a moment of doubt touching his identity, and coupled with the circumstances of that morning, there remained little more that the clew was now found to the cause of the murder.

We shall not stop to relate the particulars of the examination. It was short, reserved, and had the character of an investigation instituted more for the sake of form, than from any incertitude there could exist on the subject of the facts. When the necessary inquiries were ended, the two nobles mounted. Father Xavier led the way, and the whole party proceeded toward the summit of the pass, leading Balthazar a prisoner, and leaving the body of Jacques Colis to its final rest, in that place where so many human forms had evaporated into the air before him, unless those who had felt an interest in him in life should see fit to claim his remains. The ascent between the Refuge and the summit of St. Bernard is much more severe than on any other part of the road. The end of the convent, overhanging the northern brow of the gorge, and looking like a mass of that ferruginous and melancholy rock which gave the whole region so wild and so unearthly an aspect, soon became visible, carved and moulded into the shape of a rude human habitation. The last pitch was so steep as to be formed into a sort of stairway, up which the groaning mules toiled with difficulty. This labor overcome, the party stood on the highest point of the pass. Another minute brought them to the door of the convent.

CHAPTER XXV.

"——Hadst thou not been by,
A fellow by the hand of nature marked,
Noted, and signed to do a deed of shame,
This murder had not come into my mind."
—SHAKESPEARE.

THE arrival of Sigismund's party at the hospice preceded that of the other travellers more than an hour. They were received with the hospitality with which all were then welcomed at this celebrated convent; the visits of the curious and the vulgar not having blunted the benevolence of the monks, who, mostly accustomed to entertain the low-born and ignorant, were always happy to relieve the monotony of their solitude by intercourse with guests of a superior class. The good clavier had prepared the way for their reception; for even on the wild ridge of St. Bernard, we do not fare the worse for carrying with us a prestige of that rank and consideration that are enjoyed in the world below. Although a mild Christian-like goodwill was manifested to all, the heiress of Willading, a name that was generally known and honored between the Alps and the Jura, met with those proofs of *empressement* and deference which betrayed the secret thought, in despite of conventional forms, and which told her, plainer than the words of welcome, that the retired Augustines were not sorry to see so fair and so noble a specimen of their species within their dreary walls.

All this, however, was lost on Sigismund. He was too much occupied with the events of the morning to note other things; and, first committing Adelheid and his sister to the care of their woman, he went into the open air in order to await the arrival of the rest.

As it has been mentioned, the existence of the venerable convent of St. Bernard dates from a very remote period of Christianity. It stands on the very brow of the precipice which forms the last steep ascent in mounting to the Col. The building is a high, narrow, but vast, barrack-looking edifice, built with the ferruginous stone of the region, having its gable placed toward the Valais, and its front stretching in the direction of the gorge in which it stands. Immediately before its principal door, the rock rises in an ill-shapen hillock, across which runs the path

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to Italy. This is literally the highest point of the pass, as the building itself is the most elevated habitable abode in Europe. At this spot, the distance from rock to rock, spanning the gorge, may be a hundred yards, the wild and reddish piles rising on each side for more than a thousand feet. These are merely dwarfs, however, among the sister piles, several of which, in plain view of the convent, reached to the height of eternal snow. This point in the road attained, the path began immediately to descend, and the drippings of a snowbank before the convent door, which had resisted the greatest heat of the past summer, ran partly into the valley of the Rhone, and partly into Piedmont; the waters, after a long and devious course through the plains of France and Italy, meeting again in the common basin of the Mediterranean. The path, on quitting the convent, runs between the base of the rocks on its right and a little limpid lake on its left, the latter occupying nearly the entire cavity of the valley of the gorge. It then disappears between natural palisades of rock, at the other extremity of the Col. This is the point where the superfluous waters of the lake find their outlet, descending swiftly, in a brawling little brook, on the sunny side of the Alps. The frontier of Italy is met on the margin of the lake, a long musket-shot from the abode of the Augustines, and near the site of a temple that the Romans had raised in honor of Jupiter, in his attribute of director of storms.

Such was the outline of the view which presented itself to Sigismund, when he left the building to while away the time that must necessarily elapse before the arrival of the rest of the party. The hour was still early, though the great altitude of the site of the convent had brought it beneath the influence of the sun's rays an hour before. He had learned from a servant of the Augustines, that a number of ordinary travellers, of whom in the fine season hundreds at a time frequently passed the night in their dormitories, were now breaking their fasts in the refectory of the peasants, and he was willing to avoid the questions that their curiosity might prompt when they came to hear what had occurred lower down on the mountain. One of the brotherhood was caressing four or five enormous mastiffs, that were leaping about and barking with deep throats in front of the convent, while old Uberto moved among them with a gravity and respect that better suited his years. Perceiving his guest, the Augustine quitted his dogs, and, lifting his eastern-looking cap, he gave him the salutation of the morning. Sigismund met the frank smile of the canon, who like himself was young, with a fit return. The occasion was such as Sigismund desired, and a friendly discourse succeeded, while they paced along the margin of the lake, holding the path that leads across the Col.

"You are young in your charitable office, brother," remarked the soldier, when familiarity was a little established. "This will be among the first of the winters you will have passed at your benenolent post?"

"It will make the eighth, as novice and as canon. We are early trained to this kind of life, though no practice will enable any of us to withstand the effect which the thin air and intense cold produce on the lungs many winters in succession. We go down to Martigny when there is occasion, and breathe an atmosphere better suited to man. Thou hadst an angry storm below the past night?"

"So angry that we thank God it is over, and that we are left to share your hospitality. Were there many on the mountain beside ourselves, or did any come up from Italy?"

"There were none but those who are now in the common refectory, and none came from Aoste. The season for the traveller is over. This is a month in which we see only those who are much pressed, and who have their reasons for trusting the weather. In the summer we sometimes lodge a thousand guests."

"They whom ye receive have reason to be thankful, reverend Augustine; for, in sooth, this does not seem a region that abounds in its fruits."

Sigismund and the monk looked around at the vast piles of ragged, naked rocks, and they smiled as their eyes met.

"Nature literally gives nothing," answered the Augustine; "even the fuel that warms us is transported leagues on the backs of mules, and thou wilt readily conceive that of all others this is a necessary we cannot forego.

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Happily, we have some of our ancient, and what were once rich, endowments; and——"

The young canon hesitated to proceed.

"You were about to say, father, that they who have the means to show gratitude are not always unmindful of the wants of those who share the same hospitality without possessing the same ability to manifest their respect for the institution."

The Augustine bowed, and he turned the discourse by pointing out the frontiers of Italy, and the site of the ancient temple, both of which they had by this time reached. An animal moved among the rocks, and attracted their attention.

"Can it be a chamois?" exclaimed Sigismund, whose blood began to quicken with a hunter's eagerness: "I would I had arms!"

"It is a dog, though not of our mountain breed! The mastiffs of the convent have failed in hospitality, and the poor beast has been driven to take refuge in this retired spot, in waiting for his master, who probably makes one of the party in the refectory. See, they come; their approaching footsteps have brought the cautious animal from his cover."

Sigismund saw, in truth, that a party of three pedestrians was quitting the convent, taking the path for Italy. A sudden and painful suspicion flashed upon his mind. The dog was Nettuno, most probably driven by the mastiffs, as the monk had suggested, to seek a shelter in this retreat; and one of those who approached, by his gait and stature, was no other than his master.

"Thou knowest, father," he said, with a clammy tongue, for he was strangely agitated between reluctance to accuse Maso of such a crime, and horror at the fate of Jacques Colis, "that there has been a murder on the mountain?"

The monk quietly assented. One who lived on the road, and in that age, was not easily excited by an event of so frequent occurrence. Sigismund hastily recounted to his companion all the circumstances that were then known to himself, and related the manner in which he had first met the Italian on the lake, and his general impressions concerning his character.

"All come and go unquestioned here," returned the Augustine, when the other had ended. "Our convent has been founded on charity, and we pray for the sinner without inquiring into the amount of his crime. Still we have authority, and it is especially our duty to keep the road clear that our own purposes may not be defeated. I leave thee to do what thou judgest most prudent and proper in a matter so delicate."

Sigismund was silent; but as the pedestrains were drawing near, his resolution was soon and sternly formed. The obligations that he owed to Maso made him more prompt, for it excited a jealous distrust of his own powers to discharge what he conceived to be a duty. Even those late events in which his sister was so wronged had their share, too, on the decision of a mind so resolute to be upright. Placing himself in the middle of the path, he awaited the arrival of the party, while the monk stood quietly at his side. When the travellers were within speaking distance, the young man first discovered that the companions of Il Maledetto were Pippo and Conrad. Their several rencontres had made him sufficiently acquainted with the persons of the two latter to enable him to recognize them at a glance; and Sigismund began to think the undertaking in which he had embarked more grave than he had at first imagined. Should there be a disposition to resist, he was but one against three.

"Buon giorno, Signor Capitano," cried Maso, saluting with his cap, when sufficiently near to those who occupied the path; "we meet often, and in all weathers; by day and by night; on the land and on the water; in the valley and on the mountain; in the city and on this naked rock, as Providence wills. As many chances try men's characters, we shall come to know each other in time!"

"Thou hast well observed, Maso; though I fear thou art a man oftener met than easily understood,"

"Signor, I am amphibious, like Nettuno here, being part of the earth and part of the sea. As the learned say, I am not yet classed. We are repaid for an evil night by a fine day; and the descent into Italy will be pleasanter than we found the coming up. Shall I order honest Giacomo of Aoste to prepare the supper, and to air the beds for the noble company that is to follow? You will scarce do more than reach his hostelry before the young

and the beautiful will begin to think of their pillows."

"Maso, I had thought thee among our party, when I left the Refuge this morning?"

"By San Tommaso! signor, but I had the same opinion touching yourself!"

"Thou wert early afoot, it would seem, or thou couldst not so much have preceded me?"

"Look you, brave Signor Sigismondo, for brave I know you to be, and in the water a swimmer little less determined than gallant Nettuno there—I am a traveller, and have much need of my time, which is the larger portion of my property. We sea-animals are sometimes rich, and sometimes poor, as the wind happens to blow, and of late I have been driven to struggle with foul gales and troubled waves. To such a man, an hour of industry in the morning often gives a heartier meal and sweeter rest at night. I left you all in the Refuge sleeping soundly, even to the mules,"—Maso laughed at his own fancies, as he included the brutes in the party, —"and I reached the convent just as the first touch of the sun tipped yonder white peak with its purple light."

"As thou left us so early, thou mayest not have heard, then, that the body of a murdered man was found in the bone-house—the building near that in which we slept—and that it is the body of one known?"

Sigismund spoke firmly and deliberately, as if he would come by degrees to his purpose, while at the same time he made the other sensible of his being in earnest. Maso started. He made a movement so unequivocally like one which would have manifested an intention to proceed that the young man raised his hand to repulse him. But violence was unnecessary, for the mariner instantly became composed, and seemingly more disposed to listen.

"Where there has been a crime, Maso, there must have been a criminal!"

"The Bishop of Sion could not have made truth clearer to the sinner than yourself, Signor Sigismondo! Your manner leads me to ask what I have to do with this?"

"There has been a murder, Maso, and the murderer is sought. The dead was found near the spot where thou passed the night; I shall not conceal the unhappy suspicions that are so natural."

"Diamine! where did you pass the night yourself, brave Capitano, if I may be so bold as to question my superior? Where did the noble Baron de Willading take his rest, and his fair daughter, and one nobler and more illustrious than he, and Pierre the guide, and —aye, and our friends, the mules again?"

Maso laughed recklessly once more, as he made this second allusion to the patient brutes. Sigismund disliked his levity, which he thought forced and unnatural.

"This reasoning may satisfy thee, unfortunate man, but it will not satisfy others. Thou wert alone, but we travelled in company; judging from thy exterior, thou art but little favored by fortune, whereas we are more happy in this particular; and thou hast been, and art still, in haste to depart, while the discovery of the foul deed is owing to us alone. Thou must return to the convent that this grave matter may, at least, be examined."

Il Maledetto seemed troubled. Once or twice he glanced his eyes at the quiet athletic frame of the young man, and then turned them on the path in reflection. Although Sigismund narrowly watched the workings of his countenance, giving a little of his attention also, from time to time, to the movements of Pippo and the pilgrim, he preserved himself a perfectly calm exterior. Firm in his purpose, accustomed to make extraordinary exertions in his manly exercises, and conscious of his great physical force, he was not a man to be easily daunted. It is true that the companions Maso of conducted themselves in a way to excite no additional apprehensions on their account; for, on the announcement of the murder, they moved away from his person a little, as by a natural horror of the hand that could have done the deed. They now consulted together, and profiting by their situation behind the back of the Italian, they made signs to Sigismund of their readiness to assist should it be necessary. He received the signal with satisfaction; for, though he knew them to be knaves, he sufficiently understood the difference between audacious crime and mere roguery to believe they might, in this instance at least, prove true.

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"Thou wilt return to the convent, Maso," resumed the young soldier, who would gladly avoid a struggle with a man who had done him and those he loved so much service, though resolved to discharge what he conceived to be an imperious duty; "this pilgrim and his friend will be of our party, in order that, when we quit the mountain, all may leave it blameless and unsuspected."

"Signor Sigismondo, the proposal is fair; it has a touch of reason, I allow; but unluckily it does not suit my interests. I am engaged in a delicate mission, and too much time has been already lost by the way to waste more without good cause. I have great pity for poor Jacques Colis——"

"Ha! thou knowest the sufferer's name, then; thy unlucky tongue hath betrayed thee, Maso!"

Il Maledetto was again troubled. His features betrayed it, for he frowned like a man who had committed a grave fault in a matter touching an important interest. His olive complexion changed, and his interrogator thought that his eye quailed before his own fixed look. But the emotion was transient, and shuddering, as if to shake off a weakness, his appearance became once more natural and composed.

"Thou makest no reply?"

"Signor, you have my answer; affairs press, and my visit to the convent of San Bernardo has been made. I am bound to Aoste, and should be happy to do your bidding with the worthy Giacomo. I have but a step to make to find myself in the dominions of the house of Savoy; and with your leave, gallant Capitano, I will now take it."

Maso moved a little aside with the intention to pass Sigismund, when Pippo and Conrad threw themselves on him from behind, pinning his arms to his side by main force. The face of the Italian grew livid, and he smiled with the contempt and hatred of an inveterately angered man. Assembling all his force, he suddenly exerted it with the energy and courage of a lion, shouting—

"Nettuno!"

The struggle was short but fierce. When it terminated, Pippo lay bleeding among the rocks with a broken head, and the pilgrim was gasping near him under the tremendous grip of the animal. Maso himself stood firm, though pale and frowning like one who had collected all his energies, both physical and moral, to meet this emergency.

"Am I a brute to be set upon by the scum of the earth?" he cried. "If thou wouldst aught with me, Signor Sigismondo, raise thine own arm, but strike not with the hands of these base reptiles. Thou wilt find me a man, in strength and courage, at least not unworthy of thyself."

"The attack on thy person, Maso, was not made by my order, nor by my desire, returned Sigismund, reddening. "I believe myself sufficient to arrest thee, and if not, here come assistants that thou wilt scarce deem it prudent to resist."

The Augustine had stepped on a rock the moment the struggle commenced, whence he made a signal which brought all the mastiffs from the convent. These powerful animals now arrived in a group, apprised by their instinct that strife was afoot. Nettuno immediately released the pilgrim and stood at bay, too faithful to desert his master in his need, and yet too conscious of the force opposed to him to court a contest so unequal. Luckily for the noble dog, the friendship of old Uberto proved his protection. When the younger animals saw their patriarch disposed to amity, they forebore their attack, waiting at least for another signal to be given. In the meanwhile, Maso had time to look about him, and to form his decision less under the influence of surprise and feeling than had been previously the case.

"Signor," he answered, "since it is your pleasure, I will return among the Augustines. But I ask, as simple justice, that, if I am to be hunted by dogs as a beast of prey, all who were in the same circumstances as myself may become subject to the same rule. This pilgrim and the Neapolitan came up the mountain yesterday, as well as myself, and I demand their arrest until they too can give an account of themselves. It will not be the first time that we have been inhabitants of the same prison."

Conrad crossed himself in submission, neither he nor Pippo raising any objection to the step. On the contrary, each frankly admitted it was no more than equitable on its face.

"We are poor travellers on whom many

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accidents have already alighted, and we may well be pressed to reach the end of our journey," said the pilgrim; "but that justice may be done, we shall submit without a murmur. I am loaded with the sins of many besides my own, however, and St. Peter he knows that the last are not light. This holy canon will see that masses are said in the convent chapel in behalf of those for whom I travel; this duty done, I am an infant in your hands."

The good Augustine professed the perfect readiness of the fraternity to pray for all who were in necessity, with the single proviso that they should be Christians. With this amicable understanding then, the peace was made between them, and the parties immediately took the path that led back to the convent. On reaching the building, Maso, with the two travellers who had been found in his company, were placed in safe keeping in one of the rooms of the solid edifice, until the return of the clavier should enable them to vindicate their innocence.

Satisfied with himself for the part he had acted in the late affair, Sigismund strolled into the chapel, where at that early hour some of the brotherhood were always occupied in saying masses in behalf of the souls of the living or of the dead. He was here when he received a note from the Signor Grimaldi, apprising him of the arrest of his father, and the dark suspicions that were so naturally connected with the transaction. It is unnecessary to dwell on the nature of the shock he received from this intelligence. After a few moments of bitter anguish, he perceived the urgency of making his sister acquainted with the truth as speedily as possible. The arrival of the party from the refuge was expected every moment, and by delay he increased the risk of Christine's hearing the appalling fact from some other quarter. He sought an audience, therefore, with Adelheid the instant he had summoned sufficient self-command to undertake the duty.

Mademoiselle de Willading was struck with the pale brow and agitated air of the young soldier, at the first glance of her eye.

"Thou hast permitted this unexpected blow to affect thee unusually, Sigismund," she said, smiling, and offering her hand; for she felt that the circumstances were those in which cold and heartless forms should give place to feeling and sincerity. "Thy sister is tranquil, if not happy."

"She does not know the worst—she has yet to learn the most cruel part of the truth, Adelheid; they have found one concealed among the dead of the bone-house, and are now leading him here as the murderer of poor Jacques Colis!"

"Another!" said Adelheid, turning pale in alarm. "We appear to be surrounded by assassins!"

"No, it cannot be true! I know my poor father's mildness of disposition too well; his habitual tenderness to all around him; his horror at the sight of blood, even for his odious task!"

"Sigismund, thy father!"

The young man groaned. Concealing his face with his hands, he sank into a seat. The fearful truth, with all its causes and consequences, began to dawn upon Adelheid. Sinking upon a chair herself, she sat long looking at the convulsed and working frame of Sigismund in silent horror. It appeared to her, that Providence, for some great but secret purpose, was disposed to visit them all with more than a double amount of its anger, and that a family which had been accursed for so many generations, was about to fill the measure of its woes. Still her own true heart did not change. On the contrary, its long-cherished and secret purpose rather grew stronger under this sudden appeal to its generous and noble properties, and never was the resolution to devote herself, her life, and all her envied hopes, to the solace of his unmerited wrongs, so strong riveted as at that trying moment.

In a little time Sigismund regained enough self-command to be able to commence the narrative of what had passed. They then concerted together the best means to make Christine acquainted with that which it was absolutely necessary she should now know.

"Tell her the simple truth," added Sigismund; "it cannot long be concealed, and it were better that she knew it; but tell her, also, my firm dependence on our father's innocence. God, for one of those inscrutable purposes which set human intelligence at defiance, has made him a common executioner,

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but the curse has not extended to his nature. Trust me, dearest Adelheid, a more gentle, dove-like nature does not exist in man than that of the poor Balthazar—the despised and persecuted Balthazar. I have heard my mother dwell upon the nights of anguish and sufferings that have preceded the day on which the duties of his office were to be discharged; and often have I heard that admirable woman, whose spirit is far more equal to support our unmerited fortunes, declare she has often prayed that he and all that are hers, might die, so that they died innocently, rather than one of a temper so gentle and harmless should again be brought to endure the agony she had witnessed!"

"It is unhappy that he should be here at so luckless a moment! What unhappy motives can have led thy father to this spot, at a time so extraordinary?"

"Christine will tell thee that she expected to see him at the convent. We are a race proscribed, Mademoiselle de Willading, but we are human."

"Dearest Sigismund——"

"I feel my injustice, and can only pray to be forgiven. But there are moments of feeling so intense, that I am ready to believe and treat all of my species as common enemies. Christine is an only daughter, and thou thyself, beloved Adelheid, kind, dutiful, and good as I know thee to be, art not more dear to the Baron de Willading than my poor sister is among us. Her parents have yielded her to thy generous kindness, for they believe it for her good; but their hearts have been wrung by the separation. Thou didst not know it, but Christine took her last embrace of her mother here on the mountain, at Liddes, and it was then agreed that her father should watch her in safety over the Col, and bestow the final blessing at Aoste. Mademoiselle de Willading, you move in pride, surrounded by many protectors, who are honored in doing you service; but the abased and the hunted must indulge even their best affections stealthily, and without obtrusion! The love and tenderness of Balthazar would pass for mockery with the vulgar! Such is man in his habits and opinions, when wrong usurps the place of right."

Adelheid saw that the moment was not favorable for urging consolation, and she abstained from a reply. She rejoiced, however, to hear the presence of the headsman so satisfactorily accounted for, though she could not quiet herself from apprehension of the universal weakness of human nature, which so suddenly permits the perversion of the best of our passions to the worst, and the dreadful probability that Balthazar, suffering intensely by this compelled separation from his daughter, on accidentally encountering the man who was its cause, might have listened to some violent impulse of resentment and revenge. She saw also that Sigismund, in despite of his general confidence in the principles of his father, had fearful glimmerings of some such event, and that he fearfully anticipated the worst, even while he most professed confidence in the innocence of the accused. The interview was soon ended, and they separated; each endeavoring to invent plausible reasons for what had happened.

The arrival of the party from the Refuge took place soon afterward. It was followed by the necessary explanations, and a more detailed narrative of all that had passed. A consultation was held between the chiefs of the brotherhood and the two old nobles, and the course it was most expedient to pursue was calmly and prudently discussed.

The result was not known for some hours later. It was then generally proclaimed in the convent that a grave and legal investigation of all the facts was to take place with the least possible delay.

The Col of St. Bernard, as has been stated already, lies within the limits of the present canton, but what was then the allied state of the Valais. The crime had consequently been committed within the jurisdiction of that country; but as the Valais was thus leagued with Switzerland, there existed such an intimate understanding between the two, that it was rare any grave proceedings were had against a citizen of either in the dominion of the other, without paying great deference to the feelings and the rights of the country of the accused. Messengers were therefore dispatched to Vévey, to inform the authorities of that place of a transaction which involved the safety of an officer of the great canton (for such was Balthazar), and which had cost a citizen of Vaud his life. On the other hand, a similar communication was sent to

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Sion, the two places being about equidistant from the convent, with such pressing invitations to the authorities to be prompt as were deemed necessary to bring on an immediate investigation. Melchior de Willading, in a letter to his friend the bailiff, set forth the inconvenience of his return with Adelheid at that late season, and the importance of the functionary's testimony, with such other statements as were likely to effect his wishes; while the superior of the brotherhood charged himself with making representations, with a similar intent, to the heads of his own republic. Justice in that age was not administered as frankly and openly as in this later period, its agents in the old world exercising even now a discretion that we are not accustomed to see confided to them. Her proceedings were enveloped in darkness, the blind deity being far more known in her decrees than in her principles, and mystery was then deemed an important auxiliary of power.

With this brief explanation we shall shift the time to the third day from that on which the travellers reached the convent, referring the reader to the succeeding chapter for an account of what it brought forth.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"Anon a figure enters, quaintly neat,
All pride and business, bustle and conceit;
With looks unaltered by these scenes of woe,
With speed that, entering, speaks his haste to go.
He bids the gazing throng around him fly,
And carries fate and physic in his eye."—CRABBE.

THERE is another receptacle for those who die on the Great St. Bernard, hard by the convent itself. At the close of the time mentioned in the last chapter, and near the approach of night, Sigismund was pacing the rocks on which this little chapel stands, buried in reflections to which his own history and the recent events had given birth. The snow that fell during the late storm had entirely disappeared, and the frozen element was now visible only on those airy pinnacles that form the higher peaks of the Alps. Twilight had already settled into the lower valleys, but the whole of the superior region was glowing with the fairy-like lustre of the last rays of the sun. The air was chill, for at that hour and season, whatever might be the state of the weather, the evening invariably brought with it a positive sensation of cold in the gorge of St. Bernard, where frosts prevailed at night, even in midsummer. Still the wind, though strong, was balmy and soft, blowing athwart the heated plains of Lombardy, and reaching the mountains charged with the moisture of the Adriatic and the Mediterranean. As the young man turned in his walk and faced this breeze, it came over his spirit with a feeling of hope and home. The greater part of his life had been passed in the sunny country whence it blew, and there were moments when he was lulled into forgetfulness by the grateful recollections imparted by its fragrance. But when compelled to turn northward again, and his eye fell on the misty, hoary piles that distinguished his native land, rude and ragged faces of rock, frozen glaciers, and deep ravine-like valleys and glens, seemed to him to be types of his own stormy, unprofitable, and fruitless life, and to foretell a career which, though it might have touches of grandeur, was doomed to be barren of all that is genial and consolatory.

All in and about the convent was still. The mountain had an imposing air of deep solitude amid the wildest natural magnificence. Few travellers had passed since the storm, and, luckily for those who, under the peculiar circumstances in which they were placed, had so much desired privacy, all of these had diligently gone their several ways. None were left, therefore, on the Col, but those who had an interest in the serious investigations which were about to take place. An officer of justice from Sion, wearing the livery of Valais, appeared at a window, a sign that the regular authorities of the country had taken cognizance of the murder; but disappearing, the young man, to all external appearance, was left in the solitary possession of the pass. Even the dogs had been kennelled, and the pious monks were healthfully occupied in the religious offices of the vespers.

Sigismund turned his eyes upward to the apartment in which Adelheid and his sister dwelt, but as the solemn moment in which so much was to be decided drew nearer, they

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also had withdrawn into themselves, ceasing to hold communion, even by means of the eyes, with aught that might divert their holy and pure thoughts from ceaseless and intense devotional reflections. Until now he had been occasionally favored with an answering and kind look from one or the other of these single-hearted and affectionate girls, both of whom he so warmly loved, though with sentiments so different. It seemed that they too had at last left him to his isolated and hopeless existence. Sensible that this passing thought was weak and unmanly, the young man renewed his walk, and instead of turning as before, he moved slowly on, stopping only when he had reached the opening of the little chapel of the dead.

Unlike the building lower down the path, the bone-house at the convent is divided into two apartments; the exterior, and one that may be called interior, though both are open to the weather. The former contained piles of disjointed human bones, bleached by the storms that beat in at the windows, while the latter is consecrated to the covering of those that still preserve, in their outward appearance at least, some of the more familiar traces of humanity. The first had its usual complement of dissevered and confounded fragments, in which the remains of young and old, of the two sexes, the fierce and the meek, the penitent and the sinner, lay in indiscriminate confusion—an eloquent reproach to the pride of man; while the walls of the last supported some twenty blackened and shrivelled effigies of the race, to show to what a pass of disgusting and frightful deformity the human form can be reduced, when deprived of that noble principle which likens it to its Divine Creator. On a table, in the centre of a group of black and grinning companions in misfortune, sat all that was left of Jacques Colis, who had been removed from the bone-house below to this at the convent for purposes connected with the coming investigation. The body was accidentally placed in such an attitude that the face was brought within the line of the parting light, while it had no other covering than the clothes worn by the murdered man in life. Sigismund gazed long at the pallid lineaments. They were still distorted with the agony produced by separating the soul from the body. All feeling of resentment for his sister's wrongs was lost in pity for the fate that had so suddenly overtaken one, in whom the passions, the interests, and the complicated machinery of this state of being, were so actively at work. Then came the bitter apprehension that his own father, in a moment of ungovernable anger, excited by the accumulated wrongs that bore so hard on him and his, might really have been the instrument of effecting the fearful and sudden change. Sickening with the thought, the young man turned and walked away toward the brow of the declivity. Voices, ascending to his ear, recalled him to the actual situation of things.

A train of mules were climbing the last acclivity where the path takes the broken precipitous appearance of a flight of steps. The light was still sufficient to distinguish the forms and general appearance of the travellers. Sigismund immediately recognized them to be the bailiff of Vévey and his attendants, for whose arrival the formal proceedings of the examination had alone been stayed.

"A fair evening, Herr Sigismund, and a happy meeting," cried Peterchen, so soon as his weary mule, which frequently halted under its unwieldy burden, had brought him within hearing. "Little did I think to see thee again so quickly, and less still to lay eyes on this holy convent; for though the traveller might have returned in thy person, nothing short of a miracle——" Here the bailiff winked, for he was one of those Protestants whose faith was most manifested in these side-hits at the opinions and practices of Rome,—"Nothing but a miracle, I say, and that too a miracle of some saint whose bones have been drying these ten thousand years, until every morsel of our weak flesh has fairly disappeared, could bring down old St. Bernard's abode upon the shores of the Leman. I have known many who have left Vaud to cross the Alps come back and winter in Vévey; but never did I know the stone that was placed upon another, in a workmanlike manner, quit its bed without help from the hand of man. They say stones are particularly hard-hearted, and yet your saint and miracle-monger hath a way to move them?"

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Peterchen chuckled at his own pleasantry, as men in authority are apt to enjoy that which comes exclusively of their own cleverness, and he winked round among his followers, as if he would invite them to bear witness to the rap he had given the Papists, even on their own exclusive ground. When the platform of the Col was attained, he checked the mule and continued his address, for want of wind had nipped his wit, as it might be, in the bud.

"A bad business this, Herr Sigismund; a thoroughly bad affair. It has drawn me far from home, at a ticklish season, and it has unexpectedly stopped the Herr von Willading" (he spoke in German) "in his journey over the mountains, and that, too, at a moment when all had need be diligent among the Alps. How does the keen air of the Col agree with the fair Adelheid?"

"God be thanked, Herr Bailiff, in bodily health that excellent young lady was never better."

"God be thanked, right truly! She is a tender flower, and one that might be suddenly cut off by the frosts of St. Bernard. And the noble Genoese who travels with so much modest simplicity, in a way to reprove the vain and idle—I hope he does not miss the sun among our rocks?"

"He is an Italian, and must think of us according to his habits; though in the way of health he seems at ease."

"Well, this is consolatory! Herr Sigismund, were the truth known," rejoined Peterchen, bending as far forward on his mule as a certain protuberance of his body would permit, and then suddenly drawing himself up again in reserve—"but a State secret is a State secret, and least of all should it escape one who is truly and legitimately a child of the State. My love and friendship for Melchior von Willading are great, and of right excellent quality; but I should not have visited this pass, were it not to do honor to our guest the Genoese. I would not that the noble stranger went down from our hills with an unsavory opinion of our hospitality. Hath the honorable châtelaine from Sion reached the hill?"

"He has been among us since the turn of the day, mein herr, and is now in conference with those you have just named, on matters connected with the object of your common visit."

"He is an honest magistrate! and like ourselves, Master Sigismund, he comes of the pure German root, which is a foundation to support merit, though it might better be said by another. Had he a comfortable ride?"

"I have heard no complaint of his ascent."

"'Tis well. When the magistrate goes forth to do justice, he has a right to look for a fair time. All are then comfortable;—the noble Genoese, the honorable Melchior, and the worthy châtelain. And Jacques Colis?"

"You know his unhappy fate, Herr Bailiff," returned Sigismund briefly; for he was a little vexed with the other's phlegm in a matter that so nearly touched his own feelings.

"If I did not know it, Herr Steinbach, dost think I should now be here, instead of preparing for a warm bed near the great square of Vévey? Poor Jacques Colis! Well, he did the ceremonies of the abbaye an ill turn in refusing to buckle with the headsman's daughter, but I do not know that he at all deserved the fate with which he has met."

"God forbid that any who were hurt, and that perhaps not without reason, by his want of faith, should think his weakness merited a punishment so heavy!"

"Thou speakest like a sensible youth, a very sensible youth—aye, and like a Christian, Herr Sigismund," answered Peterchen, "and I approve of thy words. To refuse to wive a maiden and to be murdered, are very different offences, and should not be confounded. Dost think these Augustines keep kirschwasser among their stores? It is strong work to climb up to their abode, and strong toil needs strong drink. Well, should they not be so provided, we must make the best of their other liquors. Herr Sigismund, do me the favor to lend me thy arm."

The bailiff now alighted with stiffened limbs, and, taking the arm of the other, he moved slowly toward the building.

"It is damnable to bear malice, and doubly damnable to bear malice against the dead! Therefore, I beg you to take notice that I have quite forgotten the recent conduct of the deceased in the matter of our public

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games, as it becomes an impartial and upright judge to do. Poor Jacques Colis! Ah, death is awful at any time, but it is tenfold terrible to die in this sudden manner, post-haste, as it were, and that, too, on a path where we put one foot before the other with so much bodily pain. This is the ninth visit I have made the Augustines, and I cannot flatter the holy monks on the subject of their roads, much as I wish them well. Is the reverend clavier back at his post again?"

"He is, and has been active in taking the usual examinations."

"Activity is his strong property, and he needs be that, Herr Steinbach, who passeth the life of a mountaineer. The noble Genoese, and my ancient friend Melchior, and his fair daughter the beautiful Adelheid, and the equitable châtelain, thou sayest, are all fairly reposed and comfortable?"

"Herr Bailiff, they have reason to thank God that the late storm and their mental troubles have done them no harm."

"So—I would these Augustines kept kirschwasser among their liquors!"

Peterchen entered the convent, where his presence alone was wanting to proceed to business. The mules were housed, the guides received as usual in the building, and then the preparations for the long-delayed examinations were seriously commenced.

It has already been mentioned that the fraternity of St. Bernard was of very ancient origin. It was founded in the year 962 by Bernard de Menthon, an Augustine canon of Aoste in Piedmont, for the double purpose of bodily succor and spiritual consolation. The idea of establishing a religious community in the midst of savage rocks, and at the highest point trod by the foot of a man, was worthy of Christian self-denial and a benevolent philanthropy. The experiment appears to have succeeded in a degree that is commensurate with its noble intention; for centuries have gone by, civilization has undergone a thousand changes, empires have been formed and upturned, thrones destroyed, and one half the world has been rescued from barbarism, while this piously founded edifice still remains in its simple and respectable usefulness where it was first erected, the refuge of the traveller and a shelter for the poor.

The convent buildings are necessarily vast, but, as all its other materials had to be transported to the place it occupies on the back of mules, they are constructed chiefly of the ferruginous, hoary-looking stones that were quarried from the native rock. The cells of the monks, the long corridors, refectories for the different classes of travellers, and suited to the numbers of the guests, as well as those for the canons and their servants, and lodging rooms of different degrees of magnitude and convenience, with a chapel of some antiquity and of proper size, composed then, as now, the internal arrangements. There is no luxury, some comfort in behalf of those in whom indulgence has become a habit, and much of the frugal hospitality that is addressed to the personal wants and the decencies of life. Beyond this, the building, the entertainment, and the brotherhood are marked by a severe monastic self-denial, which appears to have received a character of barren and stern simplicity from the unvarying nakedness of all that meets the eye in that region of frost and sterility.

We shall not stop to say much of the little courtesies and the ceremonious asseverations of mutual good-will and respect that passed between the Bailiff of Vévey and the Prior of St. Bernard, on the occasion of their present meeting. Peterchen was known to the brotherhood, and, though a Protestant, and one too that did not forbear to deliver his jest or his witticism against Rome and its flock at will, he was sufficiently well-esteemed. In all the quêtes or collections of the convent, the well-meaning Bernois had really shown himself a man of bowels, and one that was disposed to favor humanity, even while it helped the cause of his arch-enemy, the Pope. The clavier was always well received, not only in his bailiwick but in his château, and in spite of numberless little skirmishes on doctrine and practice, they always met with a welcome and generally parted in peace. This feeling of amity and good-will extended to the superior and to all the others of the holy community, for in addition to a certain heartiness of character in the bailiff, there was mutual interest to maintain it. At the period of which we write, the vast possessions with which the monks of St. Bernard had formerly been endowed were already much re-

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duced by sequestrations in different countries, that of Savoy in particular, and they were reduced then, as now, to seek supplies to meet the constant demands of travellers in the liberality of the well-disposed and charitable; and the liberality of Peterchen was thought to be cheaply purchased by his jokes, while, on the other hand, he had so many occasions, either in his own person or those of his friends, to visit the convent, that he always forbore to push contention to a quarrel.

"Welcome again, Herr Bailiff, and for the ninth time welcome!" continued the prior, as he took the hand of Peterchen, leading the way to his own private parlor; "thou art always a welcome guest on the mountain, for we know that we entertain at least a friend."

"And a heretic," added Peterchen, laughing with all his might, though he uttered a joke which he now repeated for the ninth time. "We have met often, Herr Prior, and I hope we shall meet finally, after all our clamberings of mountains, as well as our clambering after worldly benefits, is ended, and that where honest men come together, in spite of Pope or Luther, books, sermons, aves, or devils! This thought cheers me whenever I offer thee my hand," shaking that of the other with a hearty good-will; "for I should not like to think, Father Michael, that, when we set out on the last long journey, we are to travel forever in different ways. Thou may'st tarry awhile, if thou seest fit, in thy purgatory, which is a lodging of thine own invention, and should therefore suit thee, but I trust to continue on, until fairly housed in heaven, miserable and unhappy sinner that I am!"

Peterchen spoke in the confident voice of one accustomed to utter his sentiments to inferiors, who either dared not, or did not deem it wise to dispute his oracles; and he ended with another deep-mouthed laugh, that filled the vaulted apartment of the smiling prior to the ceiling. Father Michael took all in good part, answering, as was his wont, in mildness and good-tempered charity; for he was a priest of much learning, deep reflection, and rebuked opinions. The community over which he presided was so far worldly in its objects as to keep the canons in constant communion with men, and he would not now have met for the first time one of those self-satisfied, authoritative, boisterous, well-meaning beings, of whose class Peterchen formed so conspicuous a member, had this been the first of the bailiff's visits to the Col. As it was, however, the prior not only understood the species, but he well knew the individual specimen, and he was well enough disposed to humor the noisy pleasantry of his companion. Disburdened of his superfluous clothing, delivered of his introductory jokes, and having achieved his salutations to the several canons, with suitable words of recognition to the three or four novices who were usually found on the mountain, Peterchen declared his readiness to enter on the duty of what the French call restoration. This want had been foreseen, and the prior led the way to a private refectory, where preparations had been made for a sufficient supper, the bailiff being very generally known to be a huge feeder.

"Thou wilt not fare as well as in thy warm and cheerful town of Vévey, which outdoes most of Italy in its pleasantness and fruits; but thou shalt, at least, drink of thine own warm wines," observed the superior, as they went along the corridor; "and a right good company awaits thee, to share not only thy repast, but thy good companionship."

"Hast ever a drop of kirschwasser, Brother Michael, in thy convent?"

"We have not only that, but we have the Baron de Willdading, and a noble Genoese who is in his company; they are ready to set to, the moment they can see thy face."

"A noble Genoese!"

"An Italian gentleman, of a certainty; I think they call him a Genoese."

Peterchen stopped, laid a finger on his nose, and looked mysterious; but he forbore to speak, for, by the open, simple countenance of the monk, he saw that the other had no suspicion of his meaning.

"I will hazard my office of bailiff against that of thy worthy clavier, that he is just what he seemeth—that is to say, a Genoese!"

"The risk will not be great, for so he has already announced himself. We ask no questions here, and be he who or what he may, he is welcome to come, and welcome to depart, in peace."

"Aye, this is well enough for an Augustine on the top of the Alps—he hath attendants?"

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"A menial and a friend; the latter, however, left the convent for Italy, when the noble Genoese determined to remain until this inquiry was over. There was something said of heavy affairs, which required that some explanations of the delay should be sent to others."

Peterchen again looked steadily at the prior, smiling, as in pity of his ignorance.

"Look thou, good prior, much as I love thee and thy convent, and Melchior von Willading and his daughter, I would have spared myself this journey but for that same Genoese. Let there be no questions, however, between us; the proper time to speak will come, and God forbid that I should be precipitate! Thou shalt then see in what manner a bailiff of the great canton can acquit himself! At present we will trust to thy prudence. The friend hath gone to Italy in haste, that the delay may not create surprise. Well, each one to his humor on the highway; it is mine to journey in honor and security, though others may have a different taste. Let there be little said, good Michael; not so much as an impudent look of the eye;—and now, o' Heaven's sake, thy glass of kirschwasser!"

They were at the door of the refectory, and the conversation ceased. On entering, Peterchen found his friend the Baron, the Signor Grimaldi, and the châtelain of Sion, a grave ponderous dignitary of justice of German extraction, like himself and the prior, but whose race, from a long residence on the confines of Italy, had imbibed some peculiarities of the southern character. Sigismund and all the rest of the travellers were precluded from joining the repast, to which it was the intention of the prudent canons to give a semi-official character.

The meeting between Peterchen and those who had so lately quitted Vévey was not distinguished by any extraordinary movements of courtesy; but that between the bailiff and the châtelain, who represented the authorities of friendly and adjoining States, was marked by a profusion of politic and diplomatic civilities. Various personal and public inquiries were exchanged, each appearing to strive to outdo the other in manifesting interest in the smallest details on those points in which it was proper for a stranger to feel an interest. Though the distance between the two capitals was fully fifteen leagues, every foot of the ground was travelled over by one or the other of the parties, either in commendation of its beauties, or in questions that touched its interests.

"We come equally of Teutonic fathers, Herr Châtelain," concluded the bailiff, as the whole party placed themselves at table, after the reverences and homages were thoroughly exhausted, "though Providence has cast our fortunes in different countries. I swear to thee, that the sound of thy German is music to my ears! Thou hast wonderfully escaped corruptions, though compelled to consort so much with the bastards of Romans, Celts, and Burgundians, of whom thou hast so many in this portion of thy States. It is curious to observe,"—for Peterchen had a little of an antiquarian flavor among other crude elements of his character—"that whenever a much-trodden path traverses a country, its people catch the blood as well as the opinions of those who travel it, after the manner that tares are scattered and sown by the passing winds. Here has the St. Bernard been a thoroughfare since the time of the Romans, and thou wilt find as many races among those who dwell on the wayside, as there are villages between the convent and Vévey. It is not so with you of the Upper Valais, Herr Châtelain; there the pure race exists as it came from the other side of the Rhine, and honored and preserved may it continue for another thousand years!"

There are few people so debased in their own opinion as not to be proud of their peculiar origin and character. The habit of always viewing ourselves, our motives, and even our conduct, on the favorable side, is the parent of self-esteem; and this weakness carried into communities, commonly gets to be the cause of a somewhat fallacious gauge of merit among the population of entire countries. The châtelain, Melchior de Willading, and the prior, all of whom came from the same Teutonic root, received the remark complacently, for each felt it an honor to be descended from such ancestors; while the more polished and artificial Italian succeeded in concealing the smile that on such an occasion would be apt to play about the mouth of a man whose parentage ran through a long line of sophisticated and politic nobles, into

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the consuls and patricians of Rome, and most probably through these again into the wily and ingenious Greek, a root distinguished for civilization when these patriarchs of the north lay buried in the depths of barbarism.

This little display of national vanity ended, the discourse took a more general turn. Nothing occurred during the entertainment, however, to denote that any of the company bethought him of the business on which they had met. But, just as twilight failed, and the repast was ended, the prior invited his guests to lend their attention to the matter in hand, recalling them from their friendly attacks, their time-worn jokes, and their attenuated logic, in all of which Peterchen, Melchior, and the châtelain had indulged with some freedom, to a question involving the life or death of at least one of their fellow-creatures.

The subordinates of the convent were occupied during the supper with the arrangements that had been previously commanded, and when Father Michael arose and intimated to his companions that their presence was now expected elsewhere, he led them to a place that had been completely prepared for their reception.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Was ever tale
With such a gallant modesty rehearsed?"—Home.

Purposes of convenience, as well as others that were naturally connected with the religious opinions, not to say the superstitions of most of the prisoners, had induced the monks to select the chapel of the convent for the judgment hall. This consecrated part of the edifice was of sufficient size to contain all who were accustomed to assemble within its walls. It was decorated in the manner that is usual to churches of the Romish persuasion, having its master altar, and two of smaller size that were dedicated to esteemed saints. A large lamp illuminated the place, though the great altar lay in doubtful light, leaving play for the imagination to people and adorn that part of the chapel. Within the railing of the choir there stood a table; it held some object that was concealed from view by a sweeping pall. Immediately beneath the lamp was placed another, which served the purposes of the clavier, who acted as a clerk on this occasion. They who were to fill the offices of judges took their stations near. A knot of females were clustered within the shadows of one of the side altars, hovering around each other in the way that their sensitive sex is known to interpose between the exhibition of its peculiar weaknesses and the rude observations of the world. Stifled sobs and convulsive movements occasionally escaped this little group of acutely feeling and warm-hearted beings, betraying the strength of the emotions they would fain conceal. The canons and novices were ranged on one side, the guides and muleteers formed a background to the whole, while the fine form of Sigismund stood stern and motionless as a statue, on the steps of the altar which was opposite to the females. He watched the minutest proceeding of the investigation with a steadiness that was the result of a severe practice in self-command, and a jealous determination to suffer no new wrong to be accumulated on the head of his father.

When the little confusion produced by the entrance of the party from the refectory had subsided, the prior made a signal to one of the officers of justice. The man disappeared, and shortly returned with one of the prisoners, the investigation being intended to embrace the cases of all who had been detained by the prudence of the monks. Balthazar (for it was he) approached the table in his usual meek manner. His limbs were unbound, and his exterior calm, though the quick unquiet movements of his eye, and the workings of his pale features, whenever a suppressed sob from among the females reached his ear, betrayed the inward struggle he had to maintain, in order to preserve appearances. When he was confronted with his examiners, Father Michael bowed to the châtelain; for, though the others were admitted by courtesy to participate in the investigations, the legal right to proceed in an affair of this nature within the limits of the Valais, belonged to this functionary alone.

"Thou art called Balthazar?" abruptly commenced the Judge, glancing at his notes.

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The answer was a simple inclination of the body.

"And thou art the headsman of the canton of Berne?"

A similar silent reply was given.

"The office is hereditary in thy family. It has been so for ages?"

Balthazar erected his frame, breathing heavily, like one oppressed at the heart, but who would bear down his feelings before he answered.

"Herr Châtelain," he said, with energy, "by the judgment of God it has been so."

"Honest Balthazar, thou throwest too much emphasis into thy words," interposed the bailiff. "All that belongs to authority is honorable, and is not to be treated as an evil. Hereditary claims, when venerable by time and use, have a double estimation with the world, since it brings the merit of the ancestor to sustain that of the descendant. We have our rights of the bürgershaft, and thou thy rights of execution. The time has been when thy fathers were well content with their privilege."

Balthazar bowed in submission; but he seemed to think any other reply unnecessary. The fingers of Sigismund writhed on the hilt of his sword, and a groan, which the young man well knew had been wrested from the bosom of his mother, came from the women.

"The remark of the worthy and honorable bailiff is just," resumed the Valaisan; "all that is of the state, is for the good of the state, and all that is for the comfort and security of man is honorable. Be not ashamed, therefore, of thy office, Balthazar, which, being necessary, is not to be idly condemned; but answer faithfully and with truth to the questions I am about to put. Thou hast a daughter?"

"In that much, at least, have I been blessed!"

The energy with which he spoke caused a sudden movement in the judges. They looked at each other in surprise, for it was apparent they did not expect these touches of human feeling in a man who lived, as it were, in constant warfare with his fellow-creatures.

"Thou hast reason," returned the châtelain, recovering his gravity; "for she is said to be both dutiful and comely. Thou wert about to marry this daughter?"

Balthazar acknowledged the truth of this by another inclination.

"Didst thou ever know a Vévaisan of the name of Jacques Colis?"

"Mein Herr, I did. He was to have become my son."

The châtelain was again surprised; for the steadiness of the reply denoted innocence, and he studied the countenance of the prisoner intently. He found apparent frankness where he had expected to meet with subterfuge, and like all who have great acquaintance with crime, his distrust increased. The simplicity of one who really had nothing to conceal, unlike that appearance of firmness which is assumed to affect innocence set his shrewdness at fault, though familiar with most of the expedients of the guilty.

"This Jacques Colis was to have wived thy daughter?" continued the châtelain, growing more wary as he thought he detected greater evidence of art in the accused.

"It was so understood between us."

"Did he love thy child?"

The muscles of Balthazar's mouth played convulsively; the twitchings of the lip seeming to threaten a loss of self-command.

"Mein Herr, I believed it."

"Yet he refused to fulfil the engagement."

"He did."

Even Marguerite was alarmed at the deep emphasis with which this answer was given, and for the first time in her life, she trembled lest the accumulating load of obloquy had indeed been too strong for her husband's principles.

"Thou felt'st anger at his conduct, and in the public manner in which he disgraced thee and thine?"

"Herr Châtelain, I am human. When Jacques Colis repudiated my daughter, he bruised a tender plant in the girl, and he caused bitterness in a father's heart."

"Thou hast received instruction superior to thy condition, Balthazar?"

"We are a race of executioners, but we are not the unnurtured herd that people fancy. 'Tis the will of Berne that made me what I am, and no desire nor wants of my own."

"The charge is honorable, as are all that

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come of the state," repeated the other, with the formal readiness in which set phrases are uttered; "the charge is honorable for one of thy birth. God assigns to each his station on earth, and he has fixed thy duties. When Jacques Colis refused thy daughter, he left his country to escape thy revenge?"

"Were Jacques Colis living he would not utter so foul a lie!"

"I knew his honest and upright nature!" exclaimed Marguerite, with energy. "God pardon me that I ever doubted it!"

The judges turned inquisitive glances toward the indistinct cluster of females, but the examination did not the less proceed.

"Thou knowest, then, that Jacques Colis is dead?"

"How can I doubt it, mine herr, when I saw his bleeding body?"

"Balthazar, thou seemest disposed to aid the examination, though with what views is better known to Him who sees the inmost heart, than to me. I will come at once, therefore, to the most essential facts. Thou art a native and a resident of Berne, the headsman of the canton—a creditable office in itself, though the ignorance and prejudices of man are not apt so to consider it. Thou would'st have married thy daughter with a substantial peasant of Vaud. The intended bridegroom repudiated thy child, in face of the thousands who came to Vévey to witness the festivities of the abbaye; he departed on a journey to avoid thee, or his own feelings, or rumor, or what thou wilt. He met his death by murder on this mountain; his body was discovered with the knife in the recent wound, and thou, who should'st have been on thy path homeward, wert found passing the night near the murdered man. Thine own reason will show thee the connection which we are led to form between these several events, and thou art now required to explain that which to us seems so suspicious, but which to thyself may be clear. Speak freely, but speak truth, as thou reverest God, and in thine own interest."

Balthazar hesitated, and appeared to collect his thoughts. His head was lowered in a thoughtful attitude, and then looking his examiner steadily in the face, he replied. His manner was calm, and the tone in which he spoke, if not that of one innocent in fact, was that of one who well knew how to assume the exterior of that character.

"Herr Châtelain," he said, "I have foreseen the suspicions that would be apt to fasten on me in these unhappy circumstances, but, used to trust in Providence, I shall speak the truth without fear. Of the intention of Jacques Colis to depart I knew nothing. He went his way privately, and if you will do me the justice to reflect a little, it will be seen that I was the last man to whom he would have been likely to let his intention be known. I came up the St. Bernard, drawn by a chain that your own heart will own is difficult to break if you are a father. My daughter was on the road to Italy with kind and true friends, who were not ashamed to feel for a headsman's child, and who took her in order to heal the wound that had been so unfeelingly inflicted."

"This is true!" exclaimed the Baron de Willading. "Balthazar surely says naught but truth here!"

"This is known and allowed; crime is not always the result of cool determination, but it comes of terror, of sudden thought, the angry mood, the dire temptation, and a fair occasion. Though thou left'st Vévey ignorant of Jacques Colis' departure, didst thou hear nothing of his movements by the way?"

Balthazar changed color. There was evidently a struggle in his bosom, as if he shrank from making an acknowledgment that might militate against his interests; but, glancing an eye at the guides, he recovered his proper tone of mind, and answered firmly:

"I did. Pierre Dumont had heard the tale of my child's digrace, and ignorant that I was the injured parent, he told me of the manner in which the unhappy man had retreated from the mockery of his companions. I knew, therefore, that we were on the same path."

"And yet thou perseveredst?"

"In what, Herr Châtelain? Was I to desert my daughter, because one who had already proved false to her stood in my way?"

"Thou hast well answered, Balthazar," interrupted Marguerite. "Thou hast answered as became thee! We are few, and we are all to each other. Thou wert not to forget our child because it pleased others to despise her."

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The Signor Grimaldi bent toward the Valaisan, and whispered near his ear.

"This hath the air of nature," he observed; "and does it not account for the appearance of the father on the road taken by the murdered man?"

"We do not question the probability or justness of such a motive, signor; but revenge may have suddenly mounted to the height of ferocity in some wrangle: one accustomed to blood yields easily to his passions and his habits."

The truth of these suggestions was plausible, and the noble Genoese drew back in cold disappointment. The châtelain consulted with those about him, and then desired the wife to come forth in order to be confronted with her husband. Marguerite obeyed. Her movement was slow, and her whole manner that of one who yielded to a stern necessity.

"Thou art the headsman's wife?"

"And a headsman's daughter."

"Marguerite is a well-disposed and a sensible woman," put in Peterchen; "she understands that an office under the state can never bring disgrace in the eyes of reason, and wishes no part of her history or origin to be concealed."

The glance that flashed from the eye of Balthazar's wife was withering; but the dogmatic bailiff was by far too well satisfied with his own wisdom to be conscious of its effects.

"And a headsman's daughter," continued the examining judge; "why art thou here?"

"Because I am a wife and a mother. As the latter I came upon the mountain, and as a wife I have mounted to the convent to be present at this examination. They will have it that there is blood upon the hands of Balthazar, and I am here to repel the lie."

"And yet thou hast not been slow to confess thy connection with a race of executioners! They who are accustomed to see their fellows die might have less warmth in meeting a plain inquiry of justice!"

"Herr Châtelain, thy meaning is understood. We have been weighed upon heavily by Providence, but, until now, they whom we have been made to serve have had the policy to treat us with fair words! Thou hast spoken of blood; that which has been shed by Balthazar, by his, and by mine, lies on the consciences of those who commanded it to be spilt. The unwilling instruments of thy justice are innocent before God."

"This is strange language for people of thy employment! Dost thou, too, Balthazar, speak and think with thy consort in this matter?"

"Nature has given us men sterner feelings, mein herr. I was born to the office I hold, taught to believe it right, if not honorable, and I have struggled hard to do its duties without murmuring. The case is different with poor Marguerite. She is a mother, and lives in her children; she has seen one that is near her heart publicly scorned, and she feels like a mother."

"And thou, who art a father, what has been thy manner of thinking under this insult?"

Balthazar was meek by nature, and, as he had just said, he had been trained to the exercise of his functions; but he was capable of profound affections. The question touched him in a sensitive spot, and he writhed under its feelings; but, accustomed to command himself before the public eye, and alive to the pride of manhood, his mighty effort to suppress the agony that loaded his heart was rewarded with success.

"Sorrow for my unoffending child; sorrow for him who had forgotten his faith; and sorrow for them who have been at the root of this bitter wrong," was the answer.

"This man has been accustomed to hear forgiveness preached to the criminal, and he turns his schooling to good account," whispered the wary judge to those near him. "We must try his guilt by other means. He may be readier in reply than steady in his nerves."

Signing to the assistants, the Valaisan now quietly awaited the effect of a new experiment. The pall was removed, and the body of Jacques Colis exposed. He was seated as in life, on the table in front of the grand altar.

"The innocent have no dread of those whose spirits have deserted the flesh," continued the châtelain, "but God often sorely pricks the consciences of the guilt, when they are made to see the works of their own cruel hands. Approach, and look upon the dead, Balthazar; thou and thy wife, that we

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may judge of the manner in which ye face the murdered and wronged man."

A more fruitless experiment could not well have been attempted with one of the headsman's office; for long familiarity with such sights had taken off that edge of horror which the less accustomed would be apt to feel. Whether it were owing to this circumstance, or to his innocence, Balthazar walked to the side of the body unshaken; and stood long regarding the bloodless features with unmoved tranquillity. His habits were quiet and meek, and little given to display. The feelings which crowded his mind, therefore, did not escape him in words, though a gleam of something like regret crossed his face. Not so with his companion. Marguerite took the hand of the dead man, and hot tears began to follow each other down her cheeks, as she gazed at his shrunken and altered lineaments.

"Poor Jacques Colis!" she said in a manner to be heard by all present; "thou hadst thy faults, like all born of woman; but thou didst not merit this! Little did the mother that bore thee, and who lived in thy infant smile—she who fondled thee on her knee, and cherished thee in her bosom, foresee thy fearful and sudden end! It was happy for her that she never knew the fruit of all her love, and pains, and care, else bitterly would she have mourned over what was then her joy, and in sorrow would she have witnessed thy pleasantest smile. We live in a fearful world, Balthazar; a world in which the wicked triumph! Thy hand, that would not willingly harm the meanest creature which has been fashioned by the will of God, is made to take life, and thy heart—thy excellent heart—is slowly hardening in the execution of this accursed office! The judgment-seat hath fallen to the lot of the corrupt and designing; mercy hath become the laughing-stock of the ruthless, and death is inflicted by the hand of him who would live in peace with his kind. This cometh of thwarting God's intentions with the selfishness and designs of men! We would be wiser than he who made the universe, and we betray the weakness of fools! Go to—go to, ye proud and great of the earth—if we have taken life, it hath been at your bidding; but we have naught of this on our consciences. The deed hath been the work of the rapacious and violent—it is no deed of revenge."

"In what manner are we to know that what thou sayest is true?" asked the châtelain, who had advanced near the altar, in order to watch the effects of the trial to which he had put Balthazar and his wife.

"I am not surprised at thy question, Herr Châtelain, for nothing comes quicker to the minds of the honored and happy than the thought of resenting an evil turn. It is not so with the despised. Revenge would be an idle remedy for us. Would it raise us in men's esteem? should we forget our own degraded position? should we be a whit nearer respect after the deed was done than we were before?"

"This may be true, but the angered do not reason. Thou art not suspected, Marguerite, except as having heard the truth from thy husband since the deed has been committed, but thine own discernment will show that naught is more probable than that a hot contention about the past may have led Balthazar, who is accustomed to see blood, into the commission of this act?"

"Here is thy boasted justice! Thine own laws are brought in support of thine own oppression. Didst thou know how much pains his father had in teaching Balthazar to strike, how many long and anxious visits were paid between his parent and mine in order to bring up the youth in the way of his dreadful calling, thou wouldst not think him so apt! God unfitted him for his office, as he had unfitted many of higher and different pretensions for duties that have been cast upon them in virtue of their birthrights. Had it been I, châtelain, thy suspicions would have a better show of reason. I am formed with strong and quick feelings, and reason has often proved too weak for passion, though the rebuke that has been daily received throughout a life hath long since tamed all of pride that ever dwelt in me."

"Thou hast a daughter present?"

Marguerite pointed to the group which held her child.

"The trial is severe," said the Judge, who began to feel compunctions that were rare to one of his habits, "but it is as necessary to your own future peace, as it is to justice itself, that the truth should be known. I am com-

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pelled to order thy daughter to advance to the body."

Marguerite received this unexpected command with cold womanly reserve. Too much wounded to complain, but trembling for the conduct of her child, she went to the cluster of females, pressed Christine to her heart, and led her silently forward. She presented her to the châtelain, with a dignity so calm and quiet, that the latter found it oppressive!

"This is Balthazar's child," she said. Then folding her arms, she retired herself a step, an attentive observer of what passed.

The Judge regarded the sweet palid face of the trembling girl with an interest he had seldom felt for any who had come before him in the discharge of his unbending duties. He spoke to her kindly, even encouragingly, placing himself intentionally between her and the dead, momentarily hiding the appalling spectacle from her view, that she might have time to summon her courage. Marguerite blessed him in her heart for this small grace, and was better satisfied.

"Thou wert betrothed to Jacques Colis?" demanded the châtelain, using a gentleness of voice that was singularly in contrast with his former stern interrogatories.

The utmost that Christine could reply was to bow her head.

"Thy nuptials were to take place at the late meeting of the Abbaye des Vignerons—it is our unpleasant duty to wound where we could wish to heal—but thy betrothed refused to redeem his pledge?"

"The heart is weak, and sometimes shrinks from its own good purposes," murmured Christine. "He was but human, and he could not withstand the sneers of all about him."

The châtelain was so entranced by her gentle and sweet manner that he leaned forward to listen, lest a syllable of what she whispered might escape his ears.

"Thou acquittest, then, Jacques Colis of any false intention?"

"He was less strong than he believed himself, mein herr; he was not equal to sharing our disgrace, which was put too rudely and too strongly before him."

"Thou hadst consented freely to the marriage thyself, and wert well disposed to become his wife?"

The imploring look and heaving respiration of Christine were lost on the blunted sensibilities of a criminal judge.

"Was the youth dear to thee?" he repeated without perceiving the wound he was inflicting on female reserve.

Christine shuddered. She was not accustomed to have affections which she considered the most sacred of her short and innocent existence so rudely probed; but, believing that the safety of her father depended on her frankness and sincerity, by an effort that was nearly superhuman, she was enabled to reply. The bright glow that suffused her face, however, proclaimed the power of that sentiment which becomes instinctive to her sex, arraying her features in the lustre of maiden shame.

"I was little used to hear words of praise, Herr Châtelain,—and they were so soothing to the ears of the despised! I felt as a girl acknowledges the preference of a youth who is not disagreeable to her. I thought he loved me—and—and what would you more, mein herr?"

"None could hate thee, innocent and abused child?" murmured the Signor Grimaldi.

"You forget that I am Balthazar's daughter, mein herr; none of our race are viewed with favor."

"Thou, at least, must be an exception!"

"Leaving this aside," continued the châtelain, "I would know if thy parents showed resentment at the misconduct of thy betrothed; whether aught was said in thy presence that can throw light on this unhappy affair?"

The officer of the Valais turned his head aside; for he met the surprised and displeased glance of the Genoese, whose eyes expressed a gentleman's opinion at hearing a child thus questioned in a matter that so nearly touched her father's life. But the look and the improper character of the examination escaped the notice of Christine. She relied, with filial confidence, on the innocence of the author of her being, and, so far from being shocked, she rejoiced, with the simplicity and confidence of the undesigning, at being permitted to say anything that might vindicate him in the eyes of his judges.

"Herr Châtelain," she answered eagerly,

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the blood that had mounted to her cheeks from female weakness, deepening to, and warming her very temples with a holier sentiment: "Herr Châtelain, we wept together when alone; we prayed for our enemies as for ourselves, but naught was said to the prejudice of poor Jacques—no, not a whisper."

"Wept and prayed!" repeated the Judge, looking from the child to the father, in the manner of a man that fancied he did not hear aright.

"I said both, mein herr; if the former was a weakness, the latter was a duty."

"This is strange language in the mouth of a headsman's child!"

Christine appeared at a loss, for a moment, to comprehend his meaning; but, passing a hand across her fair brow, she continued:

"I think I understand what you would say, mein herr," she said; "the world believes us to be without feeling and without hope. We are what we seem in the eyes of others, because the law makes it so, but we are in our hearts like all around us, Herr Châtelain—with this difference, that, feeling our abasement among men, we lean more closely and more affectionately on God. You may condemn us to do your offices and to bear your dislike, but you cannot rob us of our trust in the justice of Heaven. In that, at least, we are the equals of the proudest Baron in the cantons!"

"The examination had better rest here," said the prior, advancing with glistening eyes to interpose between the maiden and her interrogator. "Thou knowest, Herr Bourrit, that we have other prisoners."

The châtelain, who felt his own practised obduracy of feeling strangely giving way before the innocent and guileless faith of Christine, was not unwilling himself to change the direction of the inquiries. The family of Balthazar was directed so retire, and the attendants were commanded to bring forward Pippo and Conrad.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"And when thou thus
Shalt stand impleaded at the high tribunal
Of hoodwinked Justice, who shall tell thy audit?
—Cotton.

The buffoon and the pilgrim, though of a general appearance likely to excite distrust, presented themselves with the confidence and composure of innocence. Their examination was short, for the account they gave of their movements was clear and connected. Circumstances that were known to the monks too, greatly aided in producing a conviction that they could have had no agency in the murder. They had left the valley below some hours before the arrival of Jacques Colis, and they reached the convent, weary and footsore, as was usual with all who ascended that long and toilsome path, shortly after the commencement of the storm. Measures had been taken by the local authorities during the time lost in waiting the arrival of the bailiff and the châtelain, to ascertain all the minute facts which it was supposed would be useful in ferreting out the truth; and the results of these inquiries had also been favorable to these itinerants, whose habits of vagabondism might otherwise very justly have brought them within the pale of suspicion.

The flippant Pippo was the principal speaker in the short investigation, and his answers were given with a ready frankness, that, under the circumstances, did him and his companion infinite service. The buffoon, though accustomed to deception and frauds, had sufficient mother wit to comprehend the critical position in which he now was placed, and that it was wiser to be sincere, than to attempt effecting his ends by any of the usual means of prevarication. He answered the judge, therefore, with a simplicity which his ordinary pursuits would not have given reason to expect, and apparently with some touches of feeling that did credit to his heart.

"This frankness is thy friend," added the châtelain, after he had nearly exhausted his questions, the answers having convinced him that there was no ground of suspicion, beyond the adventitious circumstance of their having been travellers on the same road as the deceased; "it has done much towards convincing me of thy innocence, and it is in

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general the best shield for those who have committed no crime. I only marvel that one of thy habits should have had the sense to discover it!"

"Suffer me to tell you, Signor Castellano, or Podestà, whichever may be your Eccellenza's proper title, that you have not given Pippo credit for the wit he really hath. It is true I live by throwing dust into men's eyes, and by making others think the wrong is the right; but Mother Nature has given us all an insight into our own interests, and mine is quite clear enough to let me know when the true is better than the false."

"Happy would it be if all had the same faculty and the same disposition to put it in use."

"I shall not presume to teach one as wise and as experienced as yourself, Eccellenza, but if an humble man might speak freely in this honorable presence, he would say that it is not common to meet with a fact without finding it a very near neighbor to a lie. They pass for the wisest and the most virtuous who best know how to mix the two so artfully together, that, like the sweets we put upon healing bitters, the palatable may make the useful go down. Such at least is the opinion of a poor street buffoon, who has no better claim to merit than having learned his art on the Mole and in the Toledo of Bellisima Napoli, which, as everybody knows, is a bit of heaven fallen upon earth!"

The fervor with which Pippo uttered the customary eulogium on the site of the ancient Parthenope, was so natural and characteristic as to excite a smile in the Judge, in spite of the solemn duty in which he was engaged, and it was believed to be an additional proof of the speaker's innocence. The châtelain then slowly recapitulated the history of the buffoon and the pilgrim to his companions, the purport of which was as follows.

Pippo naïvely admitted the debauch at Vévey, implicating the festivities of the day, and the known frailty of the flesh, as the two influencing causes. Conrad, however, stood upon the purity of his life, and the sacred character of his calling, justifying the company he kept on the respectable plea of necessity, and on that of the mortifications to which a pilgrimage should, of right, subject him who undertakes it. They had quitted Vaud together as early as the evening of the day of the abbaye's ceremonies, and, from that time to the moment of their arrival at the convent, had made a diligent use of their legs, in order to cross the Col before the snows should set in and render the passage dangerous. They had been seen at Martigny, at Liddes, and St. Pierre, alone, and at proper hours, making the best of their way toward the hospice; and, though of necessity their progress and actions for several hours after quitting the latter place, were not brought within the observation of any but of that all-seeing eye which commands a view of the recesses of the Alps equally with those of more frequented spots, their arrival at the abode of the monks was sufficiently seasonable to give reason to believe that no portion of the intervening time had been wasted by the way. Thus far, their account of themselves and their movements was distinct, while, on the other hand, there was not a single fact to implicate either, beyond the suspicion that was more or less common to all who happened to be on the mountain at the moment the crime was committed.

"The innocence of these two men would seem so clear, and their readiness to appear and answer to our questions is so much in their favor," observed the experienced châtelain, "that I do not deem it just to detain them longer. The pilgrim, in particular, has a heavy trust; I understand he performs his penance as much for others as for himself, and it is scarce decent in us, who are believers and servants of the church, to place obstacles in his path. I will suggest the expediency, therefore, of giving him at least permission to depart."

"As we are near the end of the inquiries," interrupted the Signor Grimaldi, gravely, "I would suggest, with due deference to a better opinion and more experience, the propriety that all should remain, ourselves included, until we have come to a better understanding of the truth."

Both Pippo and the pilgrim met this suggestion with ready declarations of their willingness to continue at the convent until the following morning. This little concession, however, had no great merit, for the lateness of the hour rendered it imprudent to depart immediately; and the affair was finally set-

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tled by ordering them to retire, it being understood that unless previously called for, they might depart with the reappearance of the dawn. Maso was the next and last to be examined.

Il Maledetto presented himself with perfect steadiness of nerve. He was accompanied by Nettuno, the mastiffs of the convent having been kennelled for the night. It had been the habit of the dogs of late to stray among the rocks by day, and to return to the convent in the evening in quest of food, the sterile St. Bernard possessing nothing whatever for the support of man or beast, except that which came from the liberality of the monks, every animal but the chamois and the lämmergeyer refusing to ascend so near the region of eternal snows. In his master, however, Nettuno found a steady friend, never failing to receive all that was necessary to his wants from the portion of Maso himself; for the faithful beast was admitted at his periodical visits to the temporary prison in which the latter was confined.

The châtelain waited a moment for the little stir occasioned by the entrance of the prisoner to subside, when he pursued the inquiry.

"Thou art a Genoese of the name of Thomaso Santi?" he asked, consulting his notes.

"By this name, signor, am I generally known."

"Thou art a mariner, and it is said one of courage and skill. Why hast thou given thyself the ungracious appellation of Il Maledetto?"

"Men call me thus. It is a misfortune, not a crime, to be accursed."

"He that is so ready to abuse his own fortunes, should not be surprised if others are led to think he merits his fate. We have some accounts of thee in Valais; 'tis said thou art a freetrader?"

"The fact can little concern Valais or her Government, since all come and go unquestioned in this free land."

"It is true, we do not imitate our neighbors in all their policy; neither do we like to see so often those who set at naught the laws of friendly States. Why art thou journeying on this road?"

"Signor, if I am what you say, the reason of my being here is sufficiently plain. It is probably because the Lombard and the Piedmontese are more exacting of the stranger than you of the mountains."

"Your effects have been examined, and they offer nothing to support the suspicion. By all appearances, Maso, thou hast not much of the goods of life to boast of; but in spite of this, thy reputation clings to thee."

"Aye, signor, this is much after the world's humor. Let it fancy any quality in a man, and he is sure to get more than his share of the same, whether it be for or against his interest. The rich man's florin is quickly coined into a sequin by vulgar tongues, while the poor man is lucky if he can get the change of a silver mark for an ounce of the better metal. Even poor Nettuno finds it difficult to get a living here at the convent, because some difference in coat and instinct has given him a bad name among the dogs of St. Bernard!"

"Thy answer agrees with thy character; thou art said to have more wit than honesty, Maso, and thou art described as one that can form a desperate resolution, and act up to its decision at need?"

"I am as Heaven willed at the birth, Signor Castellano, and as the chances of a pretty busy life have served to give the work its finish. That I am not wanting in manly qualities, on occasion, perhaps these noble travellers will be willing to testify, in consideration of some activity that I may have shown on the Leman, during their late passage of that treacherous water."

Though this was said carelessly, the appeal to the recollection and gratitude of those he had served, was too direct to be overlooked. Melchior de Willading, the pious clavier, and the Signor Grimaldi, all testified in behalf of the prisoner, freely admitting that, without his coolness and skill, the Winkelried and all she held would irretrievably have been lost. Sigismund was not content with so cold a demonstration of his feelings. He owed not only the lives of his father and himself to the courage of Maso, but that of one dearer than all; one whose preservation, to his youthful imagination, seemed a service that might nearly atone for any crime, and his gratitude was in proportion.

"I will testify more strongly to thy merit, Maso, in face of this or any tribunal," he said, grasping the hand of the Italian. "One

who showed so much bravery and so strong love for his fellows, would be little likely to take life clandestinely and like a coward. Thou mayst count on my testimony in this strait—if thou art guilty of this crime, who can hope to be innocent?"

Maso returned the friendly grasp till their fingers seemed to grow into each other. His eye, too, showed he was not without wholesome native sympathies, though education and his habits might have warped them from their true direction. A tear, in spite of his effort to suppress the weakness, started from its fountain, rolling down his sunburnt cheek like a solitary rivulet trickling through a barren and rugged waste.

"This is frank, and as becomes a soldier, signor," he said, "and I receive it as it is given, in kindness and love. But we will not lay more stress upon the affair of the lake than it deserves. This keen-sighted châtelain need not be told that I could not be of use in saving your lives, without saving my own; and, unless I much mistake the meaning of his eye, he is about to say that we are fashioned like this wild country in which chance has brought us together, with our spots of generous fertility mingled with much unfruitful rock, and that he who does a good act to-day may forget himself by doing an evil turn to-morrow."

"Thou givest reason to all who hear thee, to mourn that thy career has not been more profitable to thyself and the public," answered the Judge. "One who can reason so well, and who hath this clear insight into his own disposition, must err less from ignorance than wantonness!"

"There you do me injustice, Signor Castellano, and the laws more credit than they deserve. I shall not deny that justice—or what is called justice—and I have some acquaintance. I have been the tenant of many prisons before this which has been furnished by the holy canons, and I have seen every stage of the rogue's progress, from him who is startled by his first crime, dreaming heavy dreams, and fancying each stone in his cellar has an eye to reproach him, to him who no sooner does a wrong than it it forgotten in the wish to find the means of committing another, and I call Heaven as a witness, that more is done to help along the scholar in his study of vice, by those who are styled the ministers of justice, than by his own natural frailties, the wants of his habits, or the strength of his passions. Let the Judge feel a father's mildness, the law possess that pure justice which is of things that are not perverted, and society become what it claims to be, a community of mutual support, and my life on it, châtelain, thy functions will be lessened of most of their weight and of all their oppression."

"This language is bold, and without an object. Explain the manner of thy quitting Vévey, Maso, the road thou hast travelled, the hours of thy passages by the different villages and the reason why thou wert discovered near the Refuge, alone, and why thou quittedst the companions with whom thou hadst passed the night so early, and so clandestinely?"

The Italian listened attentively to these several interrogatories; when they were all put, he gravely and calmly set about furnishing his answers. The history of his departure from Vévey, his appearance at St. Maurice, Martigny, Liddes, and St. Pierre, was distinctly given, and it was in perfect accordance with the private information that had been gleaned by the authorities. He had passed the last habitation on the mountain, on foot and alone, about an hour before the solitary horseman, who was now known to be Jacques Colis, was seen to proceed in the same direction, and he admitted that he was overtaken by the latter, just as he reached the upper extremity of the plain beneath Velan, where they were seen in company, though at a considerable distance, and by a doubtful light, by the travellers who were conducted by Pierre.

Thus far the account given of himself by Maso was in perfect conformity with what was already known to the châtelain; but, after turning the rock already mentioned in a previous chapter, all was buried in mystery with the exception of the incidents that have been regularly related in the narrative. The Italian, in his further explanations, added that he soon parted with his companion, who, impatient of delay, and desirous of reaching the convent before night, had urged his beast to greater speed, while he himself had turned a little aside from the path to

rest himself; and to make a few preparations that he had deemed necessary before going directly to the convent.

The whole of this short history was delivered with a composure as great as that which had just been displayed by Pippo and the pilgrim, and it was impossible for any present to detect the slightest improbability or contradiction in the tale. The meeting with the other travellers in the storm Maso ascribed to the fact of their having passed him while he was stationary, and to his greater speed when in motion, two circumstances that were quite as likely to be true as all the rest of the account. He had left the Refuge at the first glimpse of dawn, because he was behind his time, and it had been his intention to descend to Aoste that night, an exertion that was necessary in order to repair the loss.

"This may be true," resumed the Judge; "but how dost thou account for thy poverty? In searching thy effects, thou art found to be in a condition little better than that of a mendicant. Even thy purse is empty, though known to be a successful and desperate trifler with the revenue in all those States where the entrance duty is enforced."

"He that plays deepest, signor, is most likely to be stripped of his means. What is there new or unlooked for in the fact that a dealer in the contraband should lose his venture?"

"This is more plausible than convincing. Thou art signalled as being accustomed to transport articles of the jewellers from Geneva into the adjoining States, and thou art known to come from the headquarters of these artisans. Thy losses must have been unusual, to have left thee so naked. I much fear that a bootless speculation in thy usual trade has driven thee to repair the loss by the murder of this unhappy man, who left his home well supplied with gold, and, as it would seem, with a valuable store of jewelry too. The particulars are especially mentioned in this written account of his effects, which the honorable bailiff bringeth from his friends."

Maso mused silently and in deep abstraction. He then desired that the chapel might be cleared of all but the travellers of condition, the monks, and his judges. The request was granted; for it was expected that he was about to make an important confession, as indeed, in a certain degree, proved to be the fact.

"Should I clear myself of the charge of poverty, Signor Castellano," he demanded, when all the inferiors had left the place, "shall I stand acquitted in your eyes of the charge of murder?"

"Surely not; still thou wilt have removed one of the principal grounds of temptation, and in that thou wilt be greatly the gainer, for we know that Jacques Colis hath been both robbed as well as slain."

Maso appeared to deliberate again, as a man is apt to pause before he takes a step that may materially affect his interests. But suddenly deciding, like a man of prompt opinions, he called to Nettuno, and, seating himself on the steps of one of the side-altars, he proceeded to make his revelation with great method and coolness. Removing some of the long shaggy hair of the dog, Il Maledetto showed the attentive and curious spectators that a belt of leather had been ingeniously placed about the body of the animal, next its skin. It was so concealed as to be quite hid from the view of those who did not make particular search, a process that Nettuno, judging by the scowling looks he threw at most present, and the manner in which he showed his teeth, would not be likely to permit to a stranger. The belt was opened, and Maso laid a glittering necklace of precious stones, in which rubies and emeralds vied with other gems of price, with some of a dealer's coquetry, under the strong light of the lamp.

"There you see the fruits of a life of hazards and hardships, Signor Châtelaine," he said; "if my purse is empty it is because the Jewish Calvinists of Geneva have taken the last liard in payment of the jewels."

"This is an ornament of rare beauty and exceeding value, to be seen in the possession of one of thy appearance and habits, Maso!" exclaimed the frugal Valaisan.

"Signor, its cost was a hundred doppie of pure gold and full weight, and it is contracted for with a young noble of Milano, who hopes to win his mistress by the present, for a profit of fifty. Affairs were getting low with me in consequence of sundry seizures

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and a total wreck, and I took the adventure with the hope of sudden and great gain. As there is nothing against the laws of Valais in the matter, I trust to stand acquitted, châtelain, for my frankness. One who was master of this would be little likely to shed blood for the trifle that would be found on the person of Jacques Colis."

"Thou hast more," observed the Judge, signing with his hand as he spoke; "let us see all thou hast."

"Not a brooch, or so much as a worthless garnet."

"Nay, I see the belt which contains them among the hairs of the dog."

Maso either felt or feigned a well-acted surprise. Nettuno had been placed in a convenient attitude for his master to unloosen the belt, and, as it was the intention of the latter to replace it, the animal still lay quietly in the same position, a circumstance which displaced his shaggy coat, and allowed the châtelaine to detect the object to which he had just alluded.

"Signor," said the smuggler, changing color, but endeavoring to speak lightly of a discovery which all the others present evidently considered to be grave, "it would seem that the dog, accustomed to do these little offices in behalf of his master, has been tempted by success to undertake a speculation on his own account. By my patron saint and the Virgin! I know nothing of this second adventure."

"Trifle not, but undo the belt, lest I have the beast muzzled that it may be performed by others," sternly commanded the châtelain.

The Italian complied, though with an ill grace that was much too apparent for his own interest. Having loosened the fastenings, he reluctantly gave the envelope to the Valaisan. The latter cut the cloth, and laid some ten or fifteen different pieces of jewelry on the table. The spectators crowded about the spot in curiosity, while the Judge eagerly referred to the written description of the effects of the murdered man.

"A ring of brilliants, with an emerald of price, the setting chaste and heavy," read the Valaisan.

"Thank God, it is not here!" exclaimed the Signor Grimaldi. "One could wish to find so true a mariner innocent of this bloody deed!"

The châtelain believed he was on the scent of a secret that had begun to perplex him, and as few are so inherently humane as to prefer the advantage of another to their own success, he heard both the announcement and the declaration of the noble Genoese with a frown.

"A cross of turquoise of the length of two inches, with pearls of no great value intermixed," continued the Judge.

Sigismund groaned and turned away from the table.

"Unhappily, here is that which too well answers the description!" slowly and with evident reluctance, escaped from the Signor Grimaldi.

"Let it be measured," demanded the prisoner.

The experiment was made, and the agreement was found to be perfect.

"Bracelets of rubies, the stones set in foil, and six in number," continued the methodical châtelain, whose eye now lighted with the triumph of victory.

"These are wanting!" cried Melchior de Willading, who, in common with all whom he had served, took a lively interest in the fate of Maso. "There are no jewels of this description here!"

"Come to the next, Herr Châtelain," put in Peterchen, leaning to the side of the law's triumph; "let us have the next, o' God's name!"

"A brooch of amethyst, the stone of our own mountains, set in foil, and the size of one-eighth of an inch; form oval."

It was lying on the table, beyond all possibility of dispute. All the remaining articles, which were chiefly rings of the less prized stones, such as jasper, garnet, topaz, and turquoise, were also identified, answering perfectly to the description furnished by the jeweller, who had sold them to Jacques Colis the night of the fête, when, with Swiss thrift, he had laid in this small stock in trade, with a view to diminish the cost of his intended journey.

"It is a principle of law, unfortunate man," remarked the châtelain, removing the spectacles he had mounted in order to read the list, "that effects wrongly taken from one

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robbed criminates him in whose possession they are found, unless he can render a clear account of the transfer. What hast thou to say on this head?"

"Not a syllable, signor; I must refer you and all others to the dog, who alone can furnish the history of these bawbles. It is clear that I am little known in the Valais, for Maso never deals in trifles insignificant as these."

"The pretext will not serve thee, Maso; thou triflest in an affair of life and death. Wilt thou confess thy crime, ere we proceed to extremities?"

"That I have been long at open variance with the law, Signor Castellano, is true, if you will have it so; but I am as innocent of this man's death as the noble Baron de Willading here. That the Genoese authorities were looking for me, on account of some secret understanding that the republic has with its old enemies, the Savoyards, I frankly allow, too; but it was a matter of gain, and not of blood. I have taken life in my time, signor, but it has been in fair combat, whether the cause was just or not."

"Enough has been proved against thee alalready to justify the use of the torture in order to have the rest."

"Nay, I do not see the necessity of this appeal," remarked the bailiff. "There lies the dead, here is his property, and yonder stands the criminal. It is an affair that only wants the forms, methinks, to be committed presently to the axe."

"Of all the foul offences against God and man," resumed the Valaisan, in the manner of one that is about to sentence, "that which hastens a living soul, unshrived, unconfessed, unprepared, and with all its sins upon it, into another state of being, and into the dread presence of his Almighty Judge, is the heaviest, and the last to be overlooked by the law. There is less excuse for thee, Thomaso Santi, for thy education has been far superior to thy fortunes, and thou hast passed a life of vice and violence in opposition to thy reason and what was taught thee in youth. Thou hast, therefore, little ground for hope, since the State I serve loves justice in its purity above all other qualities."

"Nobly spoken, Herr Châtelain," cried the bailiff, "and in a manner to send repentance like a dagger into the criminal's soul. What is thought and said in Valais we echo in Vaud, and I would not that any I love stood in thy shoes, Maso, for the honors of the Emperor!"

"Signori, you have both spoken, and it is as men whom fortune hath favored since childhood. It is easy for those who are in prosperity to be upright in all that touches money, though by the light of the blessed Maria's countenance! I do think there is more coveted by those who have much than by the hardy and industrious poor. I am no stranger to that which men call justice, and know how to honor and respect its decrees as they deserve. Justice, signori, is the weak man's scourge and the strong man's sword; it is a breast-plate and back-plate to the one and a weapon to be parried by the other. In short, it is a word of fair import on the tongue, but of most unequal application in the deed."

"We overlook thy language in consideration of the pass to which thy crimes have reduced thee, unhappy man, though it is an aggravation of thy offences, since it proves thou hast sinned equally against thyself and us. This affair need go no further; the headsman and the other travellers may be dismissed; we commit the Italian to the irons."

Maso heard the order without alarm, though he appeared to be maintaining a violent struggle with himself. He paced the chapel rapidly, and muttered much between his teeth. His words were not intelligible, though they were evidently of strong, if not violent, import. At length he stopped short, in the manner of one who had decided.

"This matter grows serious," he said; "it will admit of no further hesitation. Signor Grimaldi, command all to leave the chapel in whose discretion you have not the most perfect confidence."

"I see none to be distrusted," answered the surprised Genoese.

"Then will I speak."

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CHAPTER XXIX.

"Thy voice to us is wind among still woods."
—SHELLEY.

NOTWITHSTANDING the gravity of the facts which were accumulating against him, Maso had maintained throughout the foregoing scene much of that steady self-possession and discernment which were the fruits of adventure in scenes of danger, long exposure and multiplied hazards. To these causes of coolness might be added the iron-like nerves inherited from nature. The latter were not easily disturbed, however critical the state to which he was reduced. Still he had changed color, and his manner had that thoughtful and unsettled air which denotes the consciousness of being in circumstances that require uncommon wariness and judgment. But his final opinion appeared to be formed when he made the appeal mentioned in the close of the last chapter, and he now only waited for the two or three officials who were present to retire, before he pursued his purpose. When the door was closed, leaving none but his ex-examiners, Sigismund, Balthazar, and the group of females in the side chapel, he turned with singular respect of manner, and addressed himself exclusively to the Signor Grimaldi, as if the judgment which was to decide his fate depended solely on his will.

"Signor," he said, "there has been much secret allusion between us; and I suppose that it is unnecessary for me to say that you are known to me."

"I have already recognized thee for a countryman," coldly returned the Genoese; "it is in vain, however, to imagine the circumstance can avail a murderer. If any consideration could induce me to forget the claims of justice, the recollection of thy good service on the Leman would prove thy best friend. As it is, I fear thou hast naught to expect from me."

Maso was silent. He looked the other steadily in the face, as if he would study his character, though he guardedly prevented his manner from losing its appearance of profound respect.

"Signor, the chances of life were greatly with you at the birth. You were born the heir of a powerful house, in which gold is more plenty than woes in a poor man's cabin, and you have not been made to learn by experience how hard it is to keep down the longings for those pleasures which the base metal will purchase, when we see others rolling in its luxuries."

"This plea will not avail thee, unfortunate man; else were there an end of human institutions. The difference of which thou speakest is a simple consequence of the rights of property; and even the barbarian admits the sacred duty of respecting that which is another's."

"A word from one like you, illustrious signor, would open for me the road to Piedmont," continued Maso, unmoved; "once across the frontiers, it shall be my care never to molest the rocks of Valais again. I ask only what I have been the means of saving, Eccellenza—life."

The Signor Grimaldi shook his head, though it was very evident that he declined the required intercession with much reluctance. He and old Melchior de Willading exchanged glances; and all who noted this silent intercourse understood it to say, that each considered duty to God a higher obligation than gratitude for a service rendered to themselves.

"Ask gold, or what thou wilt else, but do not ask me to aid in defeating justice. Gladly would I have given for the asking, twenty times the value of those miserable bawbles for whose possession, Maso, thou hast rashly taken life; but I cannot become a sharer of thy crime, by refusing atonement for his friends. It is too late; I cannot befriend thee now, if I would."

"Thou hearest the answer of this noble gentleman," interposed the châtelain; "it is wise and seemly, and thou greatly overratest his influence or that of any present, if thou fanciest the laws can be set aside at pleasure. Wert thou a noble thyself, or the son of a prince, judgment would have its way in the Valais!"

Maso smiled wildly; and yet the expression of his glittering eye was so ironical as to cause uneasiness in his judge. The Signor Grimaldi, too, observed the audacious confidence of his air with distrust, for his spirit had taken secret alarm on a subject that was rarely long absent from his thoughts.

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"If thou meanest more than has been said," exclaimed the latter, "for the sake of the blessed Maria be explicit!"

"Signor Melchior," continued Maso, turning to the Baron, "I did you and your daughter fair service on the lake!"

"That thou didst, Maso, we are both willing to admit, and were it in Berne,—but the laws are made equally for all, the great and the humble, they who have friends, and they who have none."

"I have heard of this act on the lake," put in Peterchen; "and unless fame lieth—which, Heaven knows, fame is apt enough to do, except in giving their just dues to those who are in high trust,—thou didst conduct thyself in that affair, Maso, like a loyal and well-taught mariner; but the honorable châtelain has well remarked, that holy justice must have way before all other things. Justice is represented as blind, in order that it may be seen she is no respecter of persons: and wert thou an Avoyer, the decree must come. Reflect maturely, therefore, on all the facts, and thou wilt come, in time, to see the impossibility of thine own innocence. First, thou left the path, being ahead of Jacques Colis, to enter it at a moment suited to thy purposes: then thou tookest his life for gold——"

"But this is believing that to be true, Signor Bailiff, which is only yet supposed," interrupted Il Maledetto; "I left the path to give Nettuno his charge apart from curious eyes; and, as for the gold of which you speak, would the owner of a necklace of that price be apt to barter his soul against a booty like this which comes of Jacques Colis!"

Maso spoke with a contempt which did not serve his cause; for it left the impression among the auditors, that he weighed the morality and immorality of his acts simply by their result.

"It is time to bring this to an end," said the Signor Grimaldi, who had been thoughtful and melancholy while the others spoke; "thou hast something to address particularly to me, Maso; but if thy claim is no better than that of our common country, I grieve to say it cannot be admitted."

"Signor, the voice of a Doge of Genoa is not often raised in vain, when he would use it in behalf of another!"

At this sudden announcement of the traveller's rank, the monks of the châtelain started in surprise, and a low murmur of wonder was heard in the chapel. The smile of Peterchen, and the composure of the Baron de Willading, however, showed that they at least had learned nothing new. The bailiff whispered the prior significantly, and from that moment his deportment toward the Genoese took still more of the character of formal and official respect. On the other hand, the Signor Grimaldi remained composed, like one accustomed to receive deference, though his manner lost the slight degree of restraint that had been imposed by the observance of the temporary character he had assumed.

"The voice of a Doge of Genoa should not be used in intercession, unless in behalf of the innocent," he replied, keeping his severe eye fastened on the countenance of the accused.

Again Il Maledetto seemed laboring with some secret that struggled on his tongue.

"Speak," continued the Prince of Genoa; for it was, in truth, that high functionary, who had journeyed incognito, in the hope of meeting his ancient friend at the sports of Vévey. "Speak, Maso, if thou hast aught serious to urge in favor of thyself; time presses, and the sight of one to whom I owe so much in this great jeopardy, without the power to aid him, grows painful."

"Signor Doge, though deaf to pity, you cannot be deaf to nature."

The countenance of the Doge became livid; his lips trembled even to the appearance of convulsions.

"Deal no longer in mystery, man of blood!" he said with energy. "What is thy meaning?"

"I entreat your Eccellenza to be calm. Necessity forces me to speak; for, as you see, I stand between this revelation and the block—I am Bartoldo Contini!"

The groan that escaped the compressed lips of the Doge, the manner in which he sank into a seat, and the hue of death that settled over his aged countenance, until it was more ghastly even than that of the unhappy victim of violence, drew all present, in wonder and alarm, around his chair. Signing for those who pressed upon him to give

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way, the Prince sat gazing at Maso, with eyes that appeared ready to burst from their sockets.

"Thou Bartolomeo!" he uttered huskily, as if horror had frozen his voice.

"I am Bartolo, signor, and no other. He who goes through many scenes hath occasion for many names. Even your Highness travels at times under a cloud."

The Doge continued to stare on the speaker with the fixedness of regard that one might be supposed to fasten on a creature of unearthly existence.

"Melchior," he said slowly, turning his eyes from one to the other of the forms that filled them, for Sigismund had advanced to the side of Maso, in kind concern for the old man's condition,—"Melchior, we are but feeble and miserable creatures in the hand of one who looks upon the proudest and happiest of us, as we look upon the worm that crawls the earth! What are hope, and honor, and our fondest love, in the great train of events that time heaves from its womb, bringing forth to our confusion? Are we proud? fortune revenges itself for our want of humility by its scorn. Are we happy? it is but the calm that precedes the storm. Are we great? it is but to lead us into abuses that will justify our fall. Are we honored? stains tarnish our good names, in spite of all our care!"

"He who puts his trust in the Son of Maria need never despair!" whispered the worthy clavier, touched nearly to tears by the sudden distress of one whom he had learned to respect. "Let the fortunes of the world pass away, or change as they will, his chastening love outliveth time!"

The Signor Grimaldi, for, though the elected of Genoa, such was in truth the family name of the Doge, turned his vacant gaze for an instant on the Augustine, but it soon reverted to the forms and faces of Maso and Sigismund, who still stood before him, filling his thoughts even more than his sight.

"Yes, there is a power," he resumed, "a great and beneficent Being to equalize our fortunes here, and when we pass into another state of being, loaded with the wrongs of this, we shall have justice! Tell me, Melchior, thou who knew my youth, who read my heart when it was open as day, what was there in it to deserve this punishment? Here is Balthazar, come of a race of executioners—a man condemned of opinion—that prejudice besets with a hedge of hatred—that men point at with their fingers, and whom the dogs are ready to bay—this Balthazar is the father of that gallant youth, whose form is so perfect, whose spirit is so noble, and whose life so pure; while I, the last of a line that is lost in the obscurity of time, the wealthiest of my land, and the chosen of my peers, am accursed with an outcast, a common brigand, a murderer, for the sole prop of my decaying house—with this Il Maledetto —this man accursed—for a son!"

A movement of astonishment escaped the listeners, even the Baron de Willading not suspecting the real cause of his friend's distress. Maso alone was unmoved; for while the aged father betrayed the keenness of his anguish, the son discovered none of that sympathy of which even a life like his might be supposed to have left some remains in the heart of a child. He was cold, collected, observant, and master of his smallest action.

"I will not believe this," exclaimed the Doge, whose very soul revolted at this unfeeling apathy, even more than at the disgrace of being the father of such a child; "thou art not he thou pretendest to be: this foul lie is uttered that my natural feelings may interpose between thee and the block! Prove thy truth, or I abandon thee to thy fate."

"Signor, I would have saved this unhappy exhibition, but you would not. That I am Bartolo this signet, your own gift sent to be my protection in a strait like this, will show. It is, moreover, easy for me to prove what I say, by a hundred witnesses who are living in Genoa."

The Signor Grimaldi stretched forth a hand that trembled like an aspen to receive the ring, a jewel of little price, but a signet that he had, in truth, sent to be an instrument of recognition between him and his child, in the event of any sudden calamity befalling the latter. He groaned as he gazed at its well-remembered emblems, for its identity was only too plain.

"Maso—Bartolo—Gaetano—for such, miserable boy, is thy real appellation—thou canst not know how bitter is the pang that an unworthy child brings to the parent, else would

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thy life have been different. Oh! Gaetano! Gaetano! what a foundation art thou for a father's hopes! What a subject for a father's love! I saw thee last a smiling innocent cherub, in thy nurse's arms, and I find thee with a blighted soul, the pure fountain of thy mind corrupted, a form sealed with the stamp of vice, and with hands dyed in blood; prematurely old in body, and with a spirit that hath already the hellish taint of the damned!"

"Signor, you find me as the chances of a wild life have willed. The world and I have been at loggerheads this many a year, and in trifling with its laws, I take my revenge of its abuse—" warmly returned Il Maledetto, for his spirit began to be aroused. "Thou bear'st hard upon me, Doge—father—or what thou wilt—and I should be little worthy of my lineage, did I not meet thy charges as they are made. Compare thine own career with mine, and let it be proclaimed by sound of trumpet if thou wilt, which hath most reason to be proud, and which to exult. Thou wert reared in the hopes and honors of our name; thou passed thy youth in the pursuit of arms according to thy fancy, and when tired of change, and willing to narrow thy pleasures, thou looked about thee for a maiden to become the mother of thy successor; thou turned a wishing eye on one young, fair, and noble, but whose affections, as her faith, were solemnly, irretrievably plighted to another."

The Doge shuddered and veiled his eyes; but he eagerly interrupted Maso.

"Her kinsman was unworthy of her love," he cried; "he was an outcast, and little better than thyself, unhappy boy, except in the chances of condition."

"It matters not, signor; God had not made you the arbiter of her fate. In tempting her family by your greater riches, you crushed two hearts, and destroyed the hopes of your fellow creatures. In her was sacrificed an angel, mild and pure as this fair creature who is now listening so breathlessly to my words; in him a fierce untamed spirit, that had only the greater need of management, since it was as likely to go wrong as right. Before your son was born, this unhappy rival, poor in hopes as in wealth, had become desperate; and the mother of your child sank a victim to her ceaseless regrets, at her own want of faith as much as for his follies."

"Thy mother was deluded, Gaetano; she never knew the real qualities of her cousin, or a soul like hers would have loathed the wretch."

"Signor, it matters not," continued Il Maledetto, with a ruthless perseverance of intention, and a coolness of manner that would seem to merit the description which had just been given his spirit, that of possessing a hellish taint. "She loved him with a woman's heart; and with a woman's ingenuity and confidence, she ascribed his fall to despair for her loss."

"Oh, Melchior! Melchior! this is fearfully true!" groaned the Doge.

"It is so true, signor, that it should be written on my mother's tomb. We are children of a fiery climate; the passions burn in our Italy like the hot sun that glows there. When despair drove the disappointed lover to acts that rendered him an outlaw, the passage to revenge was short. Your child was stolen, hid from your view, and cast upon the world under circumstances that left little doubt of his living in bitterness, and dying under the contempt, if not the curses, of his fellows. All this, Signor Grimaldi, is the fruit of your own errors. Had you respected the affections of an innocent girl, the sad consequences to yourself and me might have been avoided."

"Is this man's history to be believed, Gaetano?" demanded the Baron, who had more than once betrayed a wish to check the rude tongue of the speaker.

"I do not—I cannot deny it; I never saw my own conduct in this criminal light before, and yet now it all seems frightfully true."

Il Maledetto laughed. Those around him thought his untimely merriment resembled the mockery of a devil.

"This is the manner in which men continue to sin, while they lay claim to the merit of innocence!" he added. "Let the great of the earth give but half the care to prevent, that they show to punish, offences against themselves, and what is now called justice will no longer be a stalking-horse to enable a few to live at the cost of the rest. As for me, I am proof of what noble blood and illustrious

ancestry can do for themselves! Stolen when a child, Nature has had fair play in my temperament, which I own is more disposed to wild adventure and manly risks than to the pleasures of marble halls. Noble father of mine, were this spirit dressed up in the guise of a senator, or a Doge, it might fare badly with Genoa!"

"Unfortunate man," exclaimed the indignant prior, "is this language for a child to use to his father? Dost thou forget that the blood of Jacques Colis is on thy soul?"

"Holy Augustine, the candor with which my general frailties are allowed, should gain me credit when I speak of particular accusations. By the hopes and piety of the reverend canon of Aoste, thy patron saint and founder, I am guiltless of this crime. Question Nettuno as you will, or turn the affair in every way that usage warrants, and let appearances take what shape they may, I swear to you my innocence. If you think that fear of punishment tempts me to utter a lie under these holy appeals (he crossed himself with reverence), ye do injustice both to my courage and to my love of the saints. The only son of the reigning Doge of Genoa has little to fear from the headsman's blow!"

Again Maso laughed. It was the confidence of one who knew the world, and was too audacious even to consult appearances unless it suited his humor, breaking out in very wantonness. A man who had led his life, was not to learn at this late day, that the want of eyes in Justice oftener means blindness to the faults of the privileged, than the impartiality that is assumed by the pretending emblem. The châtelain, the prior, the bailiff, the clavier, and the Baron de Willading, looked at each other like men bewildered. The mental agony of the Doge formed a contrast so frightful with the heartless and cruel insensibility of the son, that the sight chilled their blood. The sentiment was only the more common, from the silent but general conviction that the unfeeling criminal must be permitted to escape. There was, indeed, no precedent for leading the child of a prince to the block, unless it was for an offence which touched the preservation of the father's interests. Much was said in maxims and apothegms of the purity and necessity of rigid impartiality in administering the affairs of life, but neither had attained his years and experience without obtaining glimpses of practical things, that taught them to foresee the impunity of Maso. Too much violence would be done to a factitious and tottering edifice, were it known that a prince's son was no better than one of the vilest, and the lingering feelings of paternity were certain at last to cast a shield before the offender.

The embarrassment and doubt attending such a state of things was happily, but quite unexpectedly, relieved by the interference of Balthazar. The headsman, until this moment, had been a silent and attentive listener to all that passed; but now he pressed himself into the circle, and looking, in his quiet manner, from one to the other, he spoke with the assurance that the certainty of having important intelligence to impart, is apt to give even to the meekest, in the presence of those whom they habitually respect.

"This broken tale of Maso," he said, "is removing a cloud that has lain for nearly thirty years before my eyes. Is it true, illustrious Doge, for such it appears is your princely state, that a son of your noble stock was stolen and kept in secret from your love, through the vindictive enmity of a rival?"

"True!—alas, too true! Would it had pleased the blessed Maria, who so cherished his mother, to call his spirit to Heaven, ere the curse befell him and me."

"Your pardon, great Prince, if I press you with questions at a moment so painful. But it is in your own interest. Suffer that I may ask in what year this calamity befell your family?"

The Signor Grimaldi signed for his friend to assume the office of answering these extraordinary interrogatories, while he buried his own venerable face in his cloak, to conceal his anguish from curious eyes. Melchior Willading regarded the headsman in surprise; for an instant he was disposed to repel questions that seemed importunate; but the earnest countenance, and mild, decent demeanor of Balthazar, overcame his repugnance to pursue the subject.

"The child was seized in the autumn of the year 1693," he answered, his previous conferences with his friend having put him in possession of all the leading facts of the history.

"And his age?"

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"Was near a twelvemonth."

"Can you inform me what became of the profligate noble who committed this foul robbery?"

"The fate of the Signor Pantaleone Serrani has never been truly known; though there is a dark rumor that he died in a brawl in our own Switzerland. That he is dead there is no cause to doubt."

"And his person, noble Freiherr—a description of his person is now only wanting to throw the light of a noonday sun on what has so long been night!"

"I knew the unlucky Signor Pantaleone well in early youth. At this time mentioned his years might have been thirty, his form was seemly and of middle height, his features bore the Italian outline, with the dark eye, swarthy skin, and glossy hair of the climate. More than this, with the exception of a finger lost in one of our affairs in Lombardy, I cannot say."

"This is enough," returned the attentive Balthazar. "Dismiss your grief, princely Doge, and prepare your heart for a new-found joy. Instead of being the parent of this reckless freebooter, God at length pities and returns your real son in Sigismund, a child that might gladden the heart of any parent, though he were an emperor!"

This extraordinary declaration was made to stunned and confounded listeners. A cry of alarm burst from the lips of Marguerite, who approached the group in the centre of the chapel, trembling and anxious, as if the grave were about to rob her of a treasure.

"What is this I hear!" exclaimed the mother, whose sensitiveness was the first to take alarm. "Are my half-formed suspicions, then, too true, Balthazar? Am I, indeed, without a son? I know thou wouldst not trifle with a mother, or mislead this stricken noble in a thing like this! Speak again, that I may know the truth—Sigismund——"

"Is not our child," answered the headsman, with an impress of truth in his manner that went far to bring conviction; "our own boy died in that blessed state of infancy, and, to save thy feelings, this youth was substituted in his place by me without thy knowledge."

Marguerite moved nearer to the young man. She gazed wistfully at his flushed, excited features, in which pain at being so unexpectedly torn from the bosom of a family he had always deemed his own, was fearfully struggling with a wild and indefinite delight at finding himself suddenly relieved from a load he had long found so grievous to be borne. Interpreting the latter expression with jealous affection, she bent her face to her bosom, and retreated in silence among her companions to weep.

In the meantime a sudden and tumultuous surprise took possession of the different listeners, which was modified and exhibited according to their respective characters, as to the amount of interest that each had in the truth or falsehood of what had just been announced. The Doge clung to the hope, improbable as it seemed, with a tenacity proportioned to his recent anguish, while Sigismund stood like one beside himself. His eye wandered from the simple and benevolent, but degraded man, whom he had believed to be his father, to the venerable and imposing-looking noble who was now so unexpectedly presented in that sacred character. The sobs of Marguerite reached his ears, and first recalled him to recollection. They came blended with the fresh grief of Christine, who felt as if ruthless death had now robbed her of a brother. There was also the struggling emotion of one whose interest in him had a still tender and engrossing claim.

"This is so wonderful!" said the trembling Doge, who dreaded lest the next syllable that was uttered might destroy the blessed illusion, "so wildly improbable, that, though my soul yearns to believe it, my reason refuses credence. It is not enough to utter this sudden intelligence, Balthazar; it must be proved. Furnish but a moiety of the evidence that is necessary to establish a legal fact, and I will render thee the richest of thy class in Christendom! And thou, Sigismund, come close to my heart, noble boy," he added, with outstretched arms, "that I may bless thee, while there is hope—that I may feel one beat of a father's pulse—one instant of a father's joy!"

Sigismund knelt at the venerable Prince's feet, and receiving his head on his shoulders, their tears mingled. But even at that precious moment both felt a sense of insecurity, as if the exquisite pleasure of so pure a

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happiness was too intense to last. Maso looked upon this scene with cold displeasure; his averted face denoting a stronger feeling than disappointment, though the power of natural sympathy was so strong as to draw evidences of its force from the eyes of all the others present.

"Bless thee, bless thee, my child, my dearly beloved son!" murmured the Doge, lending himself to the improbable tale of Balthazar for a delicious instant, and kissing the cheeks of Sigismund as one would embrace a smiling infant; "may the God of heaven and earth, His only Son, and the holy Virgin undefiled, unite to bless thee, here and hereafter, be thou whom thou mayest! I owe thee one precious instant of happiness, such as I have never tasted before. To find a child would not be enough to give it birth; but to believe thee to be that son touches on the joys of paradise!"

Sigismund fervently kissed the hand that had rested affectionately on his head during this diction; then, feeling the necessity of having some guarantee for the existence of emotions so sweet, he rose and made a warm and strong appeal to him who had so long passed for his father to be more explicit, and to justify his new-born hopes by some evidence better than his simple asseveration; for solemnly as the latter had been made, and profound as he knew to be the reverence of truth which the despised headsman not only entertained himself but inculcated on all in whom he had any interest, the revelation he had just made seemed too improbable to resist the doubts of one who knew his happiness to be the fruit of the forfeiture of his veracity.

CHAPTER XXX.

"We rest—a dream has power to poison sleep;
We rise—one wandering thought pollutes the day;
We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or weep;
Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away."

—SHELLEY.

THE tale of Balthazar was simple but eloquent. His union with Marguerite, in spite of the world's obloquy and injustice, had been blessed by the wise and merciful Being who knew how to temper the wind to the shorn lamb.

"We knew we were all to each other," he continued, after briefly alluding to the early history of their births and love; "and we felt the necessity of living for ourselves. Ye that are born to honors, who meet with smiles and respectful looks in all ye meet, can know little of the feeling which binds together the unhappy. When God gave us our first-born, as he lay a smiling babe in her lap, looking up into her eye with the innocence that most likens man to angels, Marguerite shed bitter tears at the thought of such a creature's being condemned by the laws to shed the blood of men. The reflection that he was to live forever an outcast from his kind was bitter to a mother's heart. We had made many offers to the canton to be released ourselves from this charge; we had prayed them—Herr Melchior, you should know how earnestly we have prayed the council, to be suffered to live like others, and without this accursed doom—but they would not. They said the usage was ancient, that change was dangerous, and that what God willed must come to pass. We could not bear that the burden we found so hard to endure ourselves should go down forever as a curse upon our descendants, Herr Doge," he continued, raising his meek face in the pride of honesty; "it is well for those who are the possessors of honors to be proud of their priveleges; but when the inheritance is one of wrongs and scorn, when the evil eyes of our fellows are upon us, the heart sickens. Such was our feeling when we looked upon our first-born. The wish to save him from his own disgrace was uppermost, and we bethought us of the means."

"Aye!" sternly interrupted Marguerite. "I parted with my child, and silenced a mother's longings, proud nobles, that he might not become a tool of your ruthless policy; I gave up a mother's joy in nourishing and cherishing her young, that the little innocent might live among his fellows, as God had created him, their equal, and not their victim!"

Balthazar paused, as was usual with him whenever his energetic wife manifested any of her strong and masculine qualities, and then, when deep silence had followed her remark, he proceeded.

"We wanted not for wealth; all we asked

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was to be like others in the world's respect. With our money it was very easy to find those in another canton, who were willing to take the little Sigismund into their keeping. After which a feigned death and a private burial did the rest. The deceit was easily practised, for as few cared for the griefs as for the happiness of the headsman's family. The child had drawn near the end of its first year, when I was called upon to execute my office on a stranger. The criminal had taken life in a drunken brawl in one of the towns of the canton, and he was said to be a man who had trifled with the precious gifts of birth, it being suspected that he was noble. I went with a heavy heart, for never did I strike a blow without praying God that it might be the last; but it was heavier when I reached the place where the culprit awaited his fate. The tidings of my poor son's death reached me as I put foot on the threshold of the desolate prison, and I turned aside to weep for my own woes, before I entered to see my victim. The condemned man had great unwillingness to die; he had sent for me many hours before the fatal moment, to make acquaintance, as he said, with the hand that was to dispatch him to the presence of his last and eternal Judge."

Balthazar paused; he appeared to meditate on a scene that had probably left indelible impressions on his mind. Shuddering involuntarily, he raised his eyes from the pavement of the chapel, and continued the recital, always in the same subdued and tranquil manner.

"I have been the unwilling instrument of many a violent death—I have seen the most reckless sinners in the agonies of sudden and compelled repentance, but never have I witnessed so wild and fearful a struggle between earth and heaven—the world and the grave—passion and the rebuke of Providence—as attended the last hours of that unhappy man! There were moments in which the mild spirit of Christ won upon his evil mood, 'tis true; but the picture was, in general, that of revenge so fierce, that the powers of hell alone could give it birth in a human heart. He had with him an infant of an age just fitted to be taken from the breast. This child appeared to awaken the fiercest conflicting feelings; he both yearned over it and detested its sight, though hatred seemed most to prevail."

"This was horrible!" murmured the Doge.

"It was the more horrible, Herr Doge, that it should come from one who was justly condemned to the axe. He rejected the priests; he would have naught of any but me. My soul loathed the wretch—yet so few ever showed an interest in us—and it would have been cruel to desert a dying man! At the end, he placed the child in my care, furnishing more gold than was sufficient to rear it frugally to the age of manhood, and leaving other valuables which I have kept as proofs that might some day be useful. All I could learn of the infant's origin was simply this. It came from Italy, and of Italian parents; its mother died soon after its birth,"—a groan escaped the Doge—"its father still lived, and was the object of the criminal's implacable hatred, as its mother had been of his ardent love; its birth was noble, and it had been baptized in the bosom of the Church by the name of Gaetano."

"It must be he!—it is—it must be my beloved son!" exclaimed the Doge, unable to control himself any longer. He spread wide his arms, and Sigismund threw himself upon his bosom, though there still remained fearful apprehensions that all he heard was a dream. "Go on—go on—excellent Balthazar," added the Signor Grimaldi, drying his eyes and struggling to command himself. "I shall have no peace until all is revealed to the last syllable of thy wonderful, thy glorious tale."

"There remains but little more to say, Herr Doge. The fatal hour arrived, and the criminal was transported to the place where he was to give up his life. While seated in the chair in which he received the fatal blow, his spirit underwent infernal torments. I have reason to think that there were moments when he would gladly have made his peace with God. But the demons prevailed; he died in his sins! From the hour when he committed the little Gaetano to my keeping, I did not cease to entreat to be put in possession of the secret of the child's birth, but the sole answer I received was an order to appropriate the gold to my own uses, and to adopt the boy as my own. The sword was in my hand, and the signal to strike was given,

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when, for the last time, I asked the name of the infant's family and country, as a duty I could not neglect. 'He is thine—he is thine,' was the answer. 'Tell me, Balthazar, is thy office hereditary, as is wont in these regions?' I was compelled, as ye know, to say it was. 'Then adopt the urchin; rear him to fatten on the blood of his fellows!' It was mockery to trifle with such a spirit. When his head fell, it still had on its fierce features traces of the infernal triumph with which his spirit departed!"

"The monster was a just sacrifice to the laws of the canton!" exclaimed the single-minded bailiff. "Thou seest, Herr Melchior, that we do well in arming the hand of the executioner, in spite of all the sentiment of the weak-minded. Such a wretch was surely unworthy to live."

This burst of official felicitation from Peterchen, who rarely neglected to draw a conclusion favorable to the existing order of things, like most of those who reap their exclusive advantage, and to the prejudice of innovation, produced little attention; all present were too much absorbed in the facts related by Balthazar, to turn aside to speak, or think, of other matters.

"What became of the boy?" demanded the worthy clavier, who had taken as deep an interest as the rest, in the progress of the narrative.

"I could not desert him, father; nor did I wish to. He came into my guardianship at a moment when God, to reprove our repinings at a lot that he had chosen to impose, had taken our own little Sigismund to heaven. I filled the place of the dead infant with my living charge; I gave to him the name of my own son, and I can say confidently, that I transferred to him the love I had borne my own issue; though time, and use, and a knowledge of the child's character, were perhaps necessary to complete the last. Marguerite never knew the deception, though a mother's instinct and tenderness took the alarm and raised suspicions. We have never spoken freely on this together, and like you, she now heareth the truth for the first time."

"'Twas a fearful mystery between God and my own heart!" murmured the woman; "I forbore to trouble it—Sigismund or Gaetano, or whatever you will have his name, filled my affections, and I strove to be satisfied. The boy is dear to me, and ever will be, though you seat him on a throne; but Christine—the poor stricken Christine—is truly the child of my bosom!"

Sigismund went and knelt at the feet of her whom he had ever believed his mother, and earnestly begged her blessing and continued affection. The tears streamed from Marguerite's eyes, as she willingly bestowed the first, and promised never to withhold the last.

"Hast thou any of the trinkets or garments that were given thee with the child, or canst render an account of the place where they are still to be found?" demanded the Doge, whose whole mind was too deeply set on appeasing his doubts to listen to aught else.

"They are all here in the convent. The gold has been fairly committed to Sigismund, to form his equipment as a soldier. The child was kept apart, receiving such education as a learned priest could give, till of an age to serve, and then I sent him to bear arms in Italy, which I knew to be the country of his birth, though I never knew to what prince his allegiance was due. The time had now come when I thought it due to the youth to let him know the real nature of the tie between us; but I shrank from paining Marguerite and myself, and I even did his heart the credit to believe that he would rather belong to us, humbled and despised though we be, than find himself a nameless outcast, without home, country, or parentage. It was necessary, however, to speak, and it was my purpose to reveal the truth, here at the convent, in the presence of Christine. For this reason, and to enable Sigismund to make inquiries for his family, the effects received from the unhappy criminal with the child were placed among his baggage secretly. They are, at this moment, on the mountain."

The venerable old Prince trembled violently; for, with the intense feeling of one who dreaded that his dearest hopes might yet be disappointed, he feared, while he most wished, to consult these mute but veracious witnesses.

"Let them be produced!—let them be instantly produced and examined!" he whispered eagerly to those around him. Then,

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turning slowly to the immovable Maso, he demanded—"And thou, man of falsehood and of blood! what dost thou reply to this clear and probable tale?"

Il Maledetto smiled, as if superior to a weakness that had blinded the others. The expression of his countenance was filled with that look of calm superiority which certainty gives to the well informed over the doubting and deceived.

"I have to reply, signor, and honored father," he coolly answered, "that Balthazar hath right cleverly related a tale that hath been ingenuously devised. That I am Bartolo, I repeat to thee, can be proved by a hundred living tongues in Italy. Thou knowest best who Bartolo Contini is, Doge of Genoa."

"He speaks the truth," returned the Prince, dropping his head in disappointment. "Oh! Melchior, I have had but too sure proofs of what he intimates! I have long been certain that this wretch Bartolo is my son, though never before have I been cursed with his presence. Bad as I was taught to think him, my worst fears had not painted him as I now find the truth would warrant."

"Has there not been some fraud—art thou not the dupe of some conspiracy of which money has been the object?"

The Doge shook his head in a way to prove that he could not possibly flatter himself with such a hope."

"Never: my offers of money have always been rejected."

"Why should I take the gold of my father?" added Il Maledetto; "my own skill and courage more than suffice for my wants."

The nature of the answer, and the composed demeanor of Maso, produced an embarrassing pause.

"Let the two stand forth and be confronted," said the puzzled clavier, at length; "nature often reveals the truth when the uttermost powers of man are at fault—if either is the true child of the Prince, we should find some resemblance to the father to support his claim."

The test, though of doubtful virtue, was eagerly adopted, for the truth had now become so involved as to excite a keen interest in all present. The desire to explain the mystery was general, and the slightest means of attaining such an end became of a value proportionate to the difficulty of effecting the object. Sigismund and Maso were placed beneath the lamp where its light was strongest, and every eye turned eagerly to their countenances, in order to discover, or to fancy it discovered, some of those secret signs by which the mysterious affinities of nature are to be traced. A more puzzling examination could not well have been essayed. There was proof to give the victory to each of the pretenders, if such a term may be used with propriety as it concerns the passive Sigismund, and much to defeat the claims of the latter. In the olive-colored tint, the dark, rich, rolling eye, and in stature, the advantage was altogether with Maso, whose outline of countenance and penetrating expression had also a resemblance to those of the Doge, so marked as to render it quite apparent to any who wished to find it. The habits of the mariner had probably diminished the likeness, but it was too obviously there to escape detection. That hardened and rude appearance, the consequence of exposure, which rendered it difficult to pronounce within ten years of his real age, contributed a little to conceal what may be termed the latent character of his countenance, but the features themselves were undeniably a rude copy of the more polished lineaments of the Prince.

The case was less clear as respects Sigismund. The advantage of ruddy and vigorous youth rendered him such a resemblance of the Doge—in the points where it existed—as we find between the aged and those portraits which have been painted in their younger and happier days. The bold outline was not unlike that of the noble features of the venerable Prince, but neither the eye, the hair, nor the complexion, had the hues of Italy.

"Thou seest," said Maso, tauntingly, when the disappointed clavier admitted the differences in the latter particulars, "this is an imposition that will not pass. I swear to you, as there is faith in man, and hope for the dying Christian, that so far as any know their parentage, I am the child of Gaetano Grimaldi, the present Doge of Genoa, and of no other man! May the saints desert me!—the blessed Mother of God be deaf to my

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prayers!—and all men hunt me with their curses, if I say aught in this but holy truth!"

The fearful energy with which Maso uttered this solemn appeal, and a certain sincerity that marked his manner, and perhaps we might even say his character, in spite of the dissolute recklessness of his principles, served greatly to weaken the growing opinion in favor of his competitor.

"And this noble youth?" asked the sorrowing Doge—"this generous and elevated boy, whom I have already held next to my heart, with so much of a father's joy—who and what is he?"

"Eccellenza, I wish to say nothing against the Signor Sigismondo. He is a gallant swimmer, and a stanch support in time of need. Be he Swiss or Genoese, either country may be proud of him; but self-love teaches us all to take care of our own interests before those of another. It would be far pleasanter to dwell in the Palazzo Grimaldi, on our warm and sunny gulf, honored and esteemed as the heir of a noble name, than to be cutting heads in Berne; and honest Balthazar does but follow his instinct, in seeking preferment for his son!"

Each eye now turned on the headsman, who quailed not under the scrutiny, but maintained the firm front of one conscious that he had done no wrong.

"I have not said that Sigismund is the child of any," he answered in his meek manner, but with a steadiness that won him credit with the listeners. "I have only said that he belongs not to me. No father need wish a worthier son, and Heaven knows that I yield my own claims with a sorrow that it would be grievous to bear, did I not hope a better fortune for him than any which can come from a connection with a race accursed. The likeness which is seen in Maso, and which Sigismund is thought to want, proves little, noble gentlemen and reverend monks; for all who have looked closely into these matters know that resemblances are as often found between the distant branches of the same family, as between those who are more nearly united. Sigismund is not of us, and none can see any trace of either my own or of Marguerite's family in his person or features."

Balthazar paused that there might be an examination of this fact, and, in truth, the most ingenious fancy could not have detected the least affinity in looks, between either of those whom he had so long thought his parents and the young soldier.

"Let the image of Genoa question his memory, and look rather than himself. Can he find no sleeping smile, no color of the hair, nor any other common point of appearance, between the youth and those of those whom he once knew and loved?"

The anxious Prince turned eagerly toward Sigismund, and a gleam of joy lighted his face again, as he studied the young man's features.

"By San Francesco! Melchior, the honest Balthazar is right. My grandmother was a Venetian, and she had the fair hair of the boy—the eye, too, is hers—and—Oh!" bending his head aside and veiling his eyes with his hand, "I see the anxious gaze that was so constant in the sainted and injured Angiolina, after my greater wealth and power had tempted her kinsmen to force her to yield to an unwilling hand! Wretch! thou art not Bartolo; thy tale is a wicked deception, invented to shield thee from the punishment due to thy crime!"

"Admitting that I am not Bartolo, Eccellenza, does the Signor Sigismondo claim to be he? Have you not assured yourself that a certain Bartolo Contini, a man whose life is passed in open hostility to the laws, is your child? Did you not employ your confidant and secretary to learn the facts? Did he not hear from the dying lips of a holy priest, who knew all the circumstances, that 'Bartolo Contini is the son of Gaetano Grimaldi?' Did not the confederate of your implacable enemy, Cristofero Serrani, swear the same to you? Have you not seen papers that were taken with your child to confirm it all, and did you not send this signet as a gauge that Bartolo should not want your aid, in any strait that might occur in his wild manner of living, when you learned that he resolutely preferred remaining what he was, to becoming an image of sickly repentance and newly assumed nobility, in your gorgeous palace on the Strada Balbi?"

The Doge again bowed his head in dismay, for all this he knew to be true beyond a shadow of hope.

"Here is some sad mistake," he said with

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bitter regret. "Thou hast received the child of some other bereaved parent, Balthazar; but, though I cannot hope to prove myself the natural father of Sigismund, he shall at least find me one in affection and good offices. If his life be not due to me, I owe him mine; the debt shall form a tie between us little short of that which nature herself could give birth."

"Serr Doge," returned the earnest headsman, "let us not be too hasty. If there are strong facts in favor of the claims of Maso, there are many circumstances, also, in favor of those of Sigismund. To me, the history of the last is probably more clear than it can be to any other. The time, the country, the age of the child, the name, and the fearful revelations of the criminal, are all strong proofs in Sigismund's behalf. Here are the effects that were given me with the child; it is possible that they, too, may throw weight into his scale."

Balthazar had taken means to procure the package in question from among the luggage of Sigismund, and he now proceeded to expose its contents, while a breathless silence betrayed the interest with which the result was expected. He first laid upon the pavement of the chapel a collection of child's clothing. The articles were rich, and according to the fashions of the times; but they contained no positive proofs that could go to substantiate the origin of the wearer, except as they raised the probability of his having come of an elevated rank in life. As the different objects were placed upon the stones, Adelheid and Christine kneeled beside them, each too intently absorbed with the progress of the inquiry to bethink herself of those forms which, in common, throw a restraint upon the manners of their sex. The latter appeared to forget her own sorrows, for a moment, in a new-born interest in her brother's fortunes, while the ears of the former drank in each syllable that fell from the lips of the different speakers, with an avidity that her strong sympathy with the youth could alone give.

"Here is a case containing trinkets of value," added Balthazar. "The condemned man said they were taken through ignorance, and he was accustomed to suffer the child to amuse himself with them in the prison."

"These were my first offerings to my wife, in return for the gift she had made me of the precious babe," said the Doge, in such a smothered voice as we are apt to use when examining objects that recall the presence of the dead—"Blessed Angiolina! these jewels are so many tokens of thy pale but happy countenance; thou felt a mother's joy at that sacred moment, and could even smile on me!"

"And here is a talisman in sapphire, with many Eastern characters; I was told it had been an heirloom in the family of the child, and was put about its neck at the birth, by the hands of its own father."

"I ask no more—I ask no more! God be praised for this, the last and best of all his mercies!" cried the Prince, clasping his hands with devotion. "This jewel was worn by myself in infancy, and I placed it around the neck of the babe with my own hands, as thou sayest—I ask no more."

"And Bartolo Contini!" muttered Il Maledetto.

"Maso!" exclaimed a voice, which until then had been mute in the chapel. It was Adelheid who had spoken. Her hair had fallen in wild profusion over her shoulders, as she still knelt over the articles on the pavement, and her hands were clasped entreatingly, as if she deprecated the rude interruptions which had so often dashed the cup from their lips, as they were about to yield to the delight of believing Sigismund to be the child of the Prince of Genoa.

"Thou art another of a fond and weak sex, to swell the list of confiding spirits that have been betrayed by the selfishness and falsehood of men," answered the mocking mariner. "Go to, girl!—make thyself a nun; thy Sigismund is an impostor."

Adelheid, by a quick and decided interposition of her hand, prevented an impetuous movement of the young soldier, who would have struck his audacious rival to his feet. Without changing her kneeling attitude, she then spoke, modestly, but with a firmness which generous sentiments enable women to assume even more readily than the stronger sex, when extraordinary occasions call for the sacrifice of that reserve in which her feebleness is ordinarily intrenched.

"I know not, Maso, in what manner thou

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hast learned the tie which connects me with Sigismund," she said; "but I have no longer any wish to conceal it. Be he the son of Balthazar, or be he the son of a Prince, he has received my troth with the consent of my honored father, and our fortunes will shortly be one. There might be forwardness in a maiden thus openly avowing her preference for a youth; but here, with none to own him, oppressed with his long-endured wrongs, and assailed in his most sacred affections, Sigismund has a right to my voice. Let him belong to whom else he may, I speak by my venerable father's authority, when I say he belongs to us."

"Melchoir, is this true?" cried the Doge.

"The girl's words are but an echo of what my heart feels," answered the Baron, looking about him proudly, as if he would browbeat any who should presume to think that he had consented to corrupt the blood of Willading by the measure.

"I have watched thine eye, Maso, as one nearly interested in the truth," continued Adelheid, "and I now appeal to thee, as thou lovest thine own soul, to disburden thyself! While thou may'st have told some truth, the jealous affection of a woman has revealed to me that thou hast kept back part! Speak, then, and relieve the soul of this venerable Prince from torture."

"And deliver my own body to the wheel! This may be well to the warm imagination of a love-sick girl, but we of the contraband, have too much practice in men uselessly to throw away an advantage."

"Thou mayest have confidence in our faith. I have seen much of thee within the last few days, Maso, and I wish not to think thee capable of the bloody deed that hath been committed on the mountain, though I fear thy life is only too ungoverned; still I will not believe that the hero of the Leman can be the assassin of St. Bernard."

"When thy young dreams are over, fair one, and thou seest the world under its true colors, thou wilt know that the hearts of men come partly of Heaven and partly of Hell."

Masso laughed in his most reckless manner as he delivered this opinion.

"'Tis useless to deny that thou hast sympathies," continued the maiden steadily; "thou hast in secret more pleasure in serving than in injuring thy race. Thou canst not have been in such straits in company with the Signor Sigismondo, without imbibing some touch of his noble generosity. You have struggled together for our common good, you come of the same God, have the same manly courage, are equally stout of heart, strong of hand, and willing to do for others. Such a heart must have enough of noble and human impulses to cause you to love justice. Speak, then, and I pledge our sacred word that thou shalt fare better for thy candor than by taking refuge in thy present fraud. Bethink thee, Maso, that the happiness of this aged man, of Sigismund himself, if thou wilt, for I blush not to say it—of a weak and affectionate girl, is in thy keeping. Give us truth holy; sacred truth, and we pardon the past."

Il Maledetto was moved by the beautiful earnestness of the speaker. Her ingenuous interest in the result, with the solemnity of her appeal, shook his purpose.

"Thou know'st not what thou say'st, lady; thou ask'st my life," he answered, after pondering in a way to give a new impulse to the dying hopes of the Doge.

"Though there is no quality more sacred than justice," interposed the châtelain, who alone could speak with authority in the Valais; "it is fairly within the province of her servants to permit her to go unexpiated, in order that greater good may come of the sacrifice. If thou wilt prove aught that is of grave importance to the interests of the Prince of Genoa, Valais owes it to the love it bears his republic to requite the service."

Maso listened, at first with a cold ear. He felt the distrust of one who had sufficient knowledge of the world to be acquainted with the thousand expedients that were resorted to by men, in order to justify their daily want of faith. He questioned the châtelain closely as to his meaning, nor was it till a late hour, and after long and weary explanations on both sides, that the parties came to an understanding.

On the part of those who, on this occasion, were the representatives of that high attribute of the Deity which among men is termed justice, it was sufficiently apparent that they understood its exercise with certain reservations that might be made at pleasure in favor

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of their own views; and, on the part of Maso, there was no attempt to conceal the suspicions he entertained to the last, that he might be a sufferer by lessening in any degree the strength of the defences by which he was at present shielded, as the son, real or fancied, of a person so powerful as the Prince of Genoa.

As usually happens when there is a mutual wish to avoid extremities, and when conflicting interests are managed with equal address, the negotiation terminated in a compromise. As the result will be shown in the regular course of the narrative, the reader is referred to the closing chapter for the explanation.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"Speak, oh, speak!
And take me from the rack."—YOUNG.

IT will be remembered that three days were passed in the convent in that interval which occurred between the arrival of the travellers and those of the châtelain and the bailiff. The determination of admitting the claims of Sigismund, so frankly announced by Adelheid in the preceding chapter, was taken during this time. Separated from the world, and amid that magnificent solitude where the passions and the vulgar interests of life sank into corresponding insignificance as the majesty of God became hourly more visible, the Baron had been gradually won upon to consent. Love for his child, aided by the fine moral and personal qualities of the young man himself, which here stood out in strong relief, like one of the stern piles of those Alps that now appeared to his eyes so much superior, in their eternal beds, to all the vine-clad hills and teeming valleys of the lower world, had been the immediate and efficient agents in producing this decision. It is not pretended that the Bernese made an easy conquest over his prejudices, which was in truth no other than a conquest over himself, he being, morally considered, little other than a collection of the narrow opinions and exclusive doctrines which it was then the fashion to believe necessary to high civilization. On the contrary, the struggle had been severe; nor is it probable that the gentle blandishments of Adelheid, the eloquent but silent appeals to his reason that were constantly made by Sigismund in his deportment, or the arguments of his old comrade, the Signor Grimaldi, who, with a philosophy that is more often made apparent in our friendships than in our practice, dilated copiously on the wisdom of sacrificing a few worthless and antiquated opinions to the happiness of an only child, would have prevailed, had the Baron been in a situation less abstracted from the ordinary circumstances of his rank and habits, than that in which he had been so accidentally thrown. The pious clavier, too, who had obtained some claims to the confidence of the guests of the convent by his services, and by the risks he had run in their company, came to swell the number of Sigismund's friends. Of humble origin himself, and attached to the young man not only by his general merits, but by his conduct on the lake, he neglected no good occasion to work upon Melchior's mind, after he himself had become acquainted with the nature of the young man's hopes. As they paced the brown and naked rocks together, in the vicinity of the convent, the Augustine discoursed on the perishable nature of human hopes, and on the frailty of human opinions. He dwelt with pious fervor on the usefulness of recalling the thoughts from the turmoil of daily and contracted interests, to a wider view of the truths of existence. Pointing to the wild scene around him, he likened the confused masses of the mountains, their sterility, and their ruthless tempests, to the world with its want of happy fruits, its disorders, and its violence. Then directing the attention of his companion to the azure vault above him, which, seen at that elevation, and in that pure atmosphere, resembled a benign canopy of the softest tints and colors, he made glowing appeals to the eternal and holy tranquillity of the state of being to which they were both fast hastening, and which had its type in the mysterious and imposing calm of that tranquil and illimitable void. He drew his moral in favor of a measured enjoyment of our advantages here, as well as of rendering love and justice to all who merited our esteem, and to the disadvantage of those iron prejudices which confine the best sentiments in the fetters of opinions founded in

the ordinances and provisions of the violent and selfish.

It was after one of these interesting dialogues that Melchior de Willading, his heart softened and his soul touched with the hopes of heaven, listened with a more indulgent ear to the firm declaration of Adelheid, that unless she became the wife of Sigismund, her self-respect, no less than her affections, must compel her to pass her life unmarried. We shall not say that the maiden herself philosophized on premises as sublime as those of the good monk, for with her the warm impulses of the heart lay at the bottom of her resolution; but even she had the respectable support of reason to sustain her cause. The Baron had that innate desire to perpetuate his own existence in that of his descendants, which appears to be a property of nature. Alarmed at a declaration which threatened annihilation to his line, while at the same time he was more than usually under the influence of his better feelings, he promised that if the charge of murder could be removed from Balthazar, he would no longer oppose the union. We should be giving the reader an opinion a little too favorable of Herr von Willading, were we to say that he did not repent having made this promise soon after it was uttered. He was in a state of mind that resembled the vanes of his own towers, which changed their direction with every fresh current of air, but he was by far too honorable to think seriously of violating a faith that he had once fairly plighted. He had moments of unpleasant misgivings as to the wisdom and propriety of his promise, but they were of that species of regret which is known to attend an unavoidable evil. If he had any expectations of being released from his pledge, they were bottomed on certain vague impressions that Balthazar would be found guilty, though the constant and earnest asseverations of Sigismund in favor of his father had greatly succeeded in shaking his faith on this point. Adelheid had stronger hopes than either; the fears of the young man himself preventing him from fully participating in her confidence, while her father shared her expectations on that tormenting principle which causes us to dread the worst. When, therefore, the jewelry of Jacques Colis was found in the possession of Maso, and Balthazar was unanimously acquitted, not only from this circumstance, which went so conclusively to criminate another, but from the want of any other evidence against him than the fact of his being found in the bone-house instead of the Refuge, an accident that might well have happened to any other traveller in the storm, the Baron resolutely prepared himself to redeem his pledge. It is scarcely necessary to add how much this honorable sentiment was strengthened by the unexpected declaration of the headsman concerning the birth of Sigismund. Notwithstanding the asseveration of Maso that the whole was an invention conceived to favor the son of Balthazar, it was supported by proofs so substantial and palpable, to say nothing of the natural and veracious manner in which the tale was related, as to create a strong probability in the minds of the witnesses, that it might be true. Although it remained to be discovered who were the real parents of Sigismund, few now believed that he owed his existence to the headsman.

A short summary of the facts may aid the reader in better understanding the circumstances on which so much denouement depends.

It has been revealed in the course of the narrative that the Signor Grimaldi had wedded a lady younger than himself, whose affections were already in the possession of one that, in moral qualities, was unworthy of her love, but who in other respects was perhaps better suited to become her husband than the powerful noble to whom her family had given her hand. The birth of their son was soon followed by the death of the mother, and the abduction of the child. Years had passed, when the Signor Grimaldi was first apprised of the existence of the latter. He had received this important information at a moment when the authorities of Genoa were most active in pursuing those who had long and desperately trifled with the laws, and the avowed motive for the revelation was an appeal to his natural affection in behalf of a son who was likely to become a victim of his practices. The recovery of a child under such circumstances was a blow severer than his loss, and it will readily be supposed that the truth of the pretension of Maso, who

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then went by the name of Bartolomeo Contini, was admitted with the greatest caution. Reference had been made by the friends of the smuggler to a dying monk, whose character was above suspicion, and who corroborated, with his latest breath, the statement of Maso, by affirming before God and the saints that he knew him, so far as men could know a fact like this, to be the son of Signor Grimaldi. This grave testimony, given under circumstances of such solemnity, and supported by the production of important papers that had been stolen with the child, removed the suspicions of the Doge. He secretly interposed his interest to save the criminal, though, after a fruitless attempt to effect a reformation of his habits by means of confidential agents, he had never consented to see him.

Such then was the nature of the conflicting statements. While hope and the pure delight of finding himself the father of a son like Sigismund caused the aged Prince to cling to the claims of the young soldier with fond pertinacity, his cooler and more deliberate judgment had already been formed in favor of another. In the long private examination which succeeded the scene in the chapel, Maso had gradually drawn more into himself, becoming vague and mysterious, until he succeeded in exciting a most painful state of doubt and expectation in all who witnessed his deportment. Profiting by this advantage, he suddenly changed his tactics. He promised revelations of importance, on the condition that he should first be placed in security within the frontiers of Piedmont. The prudent châtelain soon saw that the case was getting to be one in which Justice was expected to be blind in the more politic signification of the term. He, therefore, drew off his loquacious coadjutor, the bailiff, in a way to leave the settlement of the affair to the feelings and wishes of the Doge. The latter, by the aid of Melchior and Sigismund, soon effected an understanding, in which the conditions of the mariner were admitted; when the party separated for the night, Il Maledetto, on whom weighed the entire load of Jacques Colis's murder, was again committed to his temporary prison, while Balthazar, Pippo, and Conrad, were permitted to go at large, as having successfully passed the ordeal of examination.

Day dawned upon the Col long ere the shades of night had deserted the valley of the Rhone. All in the convent were in motion before the appearance of the sun, it being generally understood that the events which had so much disturbed the order of its peaceful inmates' lives, were to be brought finally to a close, and that their duties were about to return into the customary channels. Orisons are constantly ascending to heaven from the pass of St. Bernard, but on the present occasion the stir in and about the chapel, the manner in which the good canons hurried to and fro through the long corridors, and the general air of excitement, proclaimed that the offices of the matins possessed more than the usual interest of the regular daily devotion.

The hour was still early when all on the pass assembled in the place of worship. The body of Jacques Colis had been removed to a side chapel, where, covered with a pall, it awaited the mass for the dead. Two large church candles stood lighted on the steps of the great altar, and the spectators, including Pierre and the muleteers, the servants of the convent, and others of every rank and age, were drawn up in double files in its front. Among the silent spectators appeared Balthazar and his wife, Maso, in truth a prisoner, but with the air of a liberated man, the pilgrim and Pippo. The good prior was present in his robes, with all of his community. During the moments of suspense which preceded the rites, he discoursed civilly with the châtelain and bailiff, both of whom returned his courtesies with interest, and in the manner in which it becomes the dignified and honored to respect appearances in the presence of their inferiors. Still, the demeanor of most was feverish and excited, as if the occasion were one of compelled gayety, into which unwelcome and extraordinary circumstances of alloy had thrust themselves unbidden.

On the opening of the door a little procession entered, headed by the clavier. Melchior de Willading led his daughter, Sigismund came next, followed by Marguerite and Christine, and the venerable Doge brought up the rear. Simple as was this wedding train, it was imposing from the dignity of the principal actors, and from the evidences

of deep feeling with which all in it advanced to the altar. Sigismund was firm and self-possessed. Still his carriage was lofty and proud, as he felt that a cloud still hung over that portion of his history to which the world attached so much importance, and he had fallen back on his character and principles for support. Adelheid had lately been so much the subject of strong emotions, that she presented herself before the priest with less trepidation than was usual for a maiden; but the fixed regard, the colorless cheek, and an air of profound reverence, announced the depth and solemn character of the feelings with which she was prepared to take the vow.

The marriage rites were celebrated by the good clavier, who, not content with persuading the Baron to make this sacrifice of his prejudices, had asked permission to finish the work he had so happily commenced, by pronouncing the nuptial benediction. Melchior de Willading listened to the short ceremony with silent self-approval. He felt disposed at that instant to believe he had wisely sacrificed the interests of the world to the right, a sentiment that was a little quickened by the uncertainty which still hung over the origin of his new son, who might yet prove to be all that he could hope, as well as by the momentary satisfaction he found in manifesting his independence by bestowing the hand of his daughter upon one whose merit was so much better ascertained than his birth. In this manner do the best deceive themselves, yielding frequently to motives that would not support investigation when they believe themselves the strongest in the right. The good-natured clavier had observed the wavering and uncertain character of the Baron's decision, and he had been induced to urge his particular request to be officiating priest by a secret apprehension that, descended again into the scenes of the world, the relenting father might become, like most other parents of these nether regions, more disposed to consult the temporal advancement than the true happiness of his child.

As one of the parties was a Protestant, no mass was said, an omission, however, that in no degree impaired the legal character of the engagement. Adelheid plighted her unvarying love and fidelity with maiden modesty, but with the steadiness of a woman whose affections and principles were superior to the little weaknesses which, on such occasions, are most apt to unsettle those who have the least of either of these great distinctive essentials of the sex. The vows to cherish and protect were uttered by Sigismund in deep manly sincerity, for, at that moment, he felt as if a life of devotion to her happiness would scarcely requite her single-minded, feminine, and unvarying truth.

"May God bless thee, dearest," murmured old Melchior, as, bending over his kneeling child, he struggled to keep down a heart which appeared disposed to mount in his throat, in spite of it's master's inclinations; "bless thee—bless thee, love, now and forever. Providence has dealt sternly with thy brothers and sisters, but in leaving thee it has still left me rich in offspring. Here is our good friend Gaetano, too—his fortune has been still harder—but we will hope—we will hope. And thou, Sigismund, now that Balthazar hath disowned thee, thou must accept such a father as Heaven sends. All accidents of early life are forgotten, and Willading, like my old heart, hath gotten a new owner and a new lord!"

The young man exchanged embraces with the Baron, whose character he knew to be kind in the main, and for whom he felt the regard which was natural to his present situation. He then turned, with a hesitating eye, to the Signor Grimaldi. The Doge succeeded his friend in paying the compliments of affection to the bride, and had just released Adelheid with a warm paternal kiss.

"I pray Maria and her holy Son in thy behalf!" said the venerable Prince with dignity. "Thou enterest on new and serious duties, child, but the spirit and purity of an angel, a meekness that does not depress, and a character whose force rather relieves than injures the softness of thy sex, can temper the ills of this fickle world, and thou may'st justly hope to see a fair portion of that felicity which thy young imagination pictures in such golden colors. And thou," he added, turning to meet the embrace of Sigismund, "whoever thou art by the first disposition of Providence, thou art now rightfully dear to me. The husband of Melchior de Willading's daughter would ever have a claim upon his most ancient and dearest

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friend, but we are united by a tie that has the interest of a singular and solemn mystery. My reason tells me that I am punished for much early and wanton pride and wilfulness, in being the parent of a child that few men in any condition of life could wish to claim, while my heart would fain flatter me with being the father of a son of whom an emperor might be proud! Thou art, and thou art not, of my blood. Without these proofs of Maso's, and the testimony of the dying monk, I should proclaim thee to be the latter without hesitation; but be thou what thou may'st by birth, thou art entirely and without alloy of my love. Be tender of this fragile flower that Providence hath put under thy protection, Sigismund; cherish it as thou valuest thine own soul; this generous and confiding love of a virtuous woman is always a support, frequently a triumphant stay, to the tottering principles of man. Oh! had it pleased God earlier to have given my Angiolina, how different might have been our lives! This dark uncertainty would not now hang over the most precious of human affections, and my closing hour would be blessed. Heaven and its saints preserve ye both, my children, and preserve ye long in your present innocence and affection!"

The venerable Doge ceased. The effort which had enabled him to speak gave way, and he turned aside that he might weep in the decent reserve that became his station and years.

Until now Marguerite had been silent, watching the countenances, and drinking in with avidity the words of the different speakers. It was now her turn. Sigismund knelt at her feet, pressing her hands to his lips in a manner to show that her high, though stern character, had left deep traces in his recollection. Releasing herself from his convulsed grasp, for just then the young man felt intensely the violence of severing those holy ties which, in his case, had perhaps something of a wild romance from their secret nature, she parted the curls on his ample brow, and stood gazing long at his face, studying each lineament to its minutest shade.

"No," she said, mournfully shaking her head, "truly thou art not of us, and God hath dealt mercifully in taking away the innocent little creature whose place thou hast so long innocently usurped! Thou wert dear to me, Sigismund—very dear—for I thought thee under the curse of my race; do not hate me, if I say my heart is now in the grave of——"

"Mother!" exclaimed the young man, reproachfully.

"Well, I am still thy mother," answered Marguerite, smiling, though painfully, "thou art a noble boy, and no change of fortune can ever alter thy soul. 'Tis a cruel parting, Balthazar, and I know not, after all, that thou didst well to deceive me, for I have had as much grief as joy in the youth—grief, bitter grief, that one like him should be condemned to live under the curse of our race—but it is ended now—he is not of us—no, he is no longer of us!"

This was uttered so plaintively that Sigismund bent his face to his hands and sobbed aloud.

"Now that the happy and proud weep, 'tis time that the wretched dried their tears," added the wife of Balthazar, looking about her with a sad mixture of agony and pride struggling in her countenance; for, in spite of her professions, it was plain that she yielded her claim on the noble youth with deep yearnings and an intense agony of spirit. "We have one consolation, at least, Christine—all that are not of our blood will not despise us now! Am I right, Sigismund—thou, too, wilt not turn upon us with the world, and hate those whom thou once loved?"

"Mother, mother, for the sake of the Holy Virgin, do not harrow my soul!"

"I will not distrust thee, dear; thou didst not drink at my breast, but thou hast taken in too many lessons of the truth from my lips to despise us—and yet thou art not of us, thou mayest possibly prove a prince's son, and the world so hardens the heart—and they who have been sorely pressed upon become suspicious——"

"For the love of God, cease, mother, or thou wilt break my heart!"

"Come hither, Christine. Sigismund, this maiden goes with thy wife; we have the greatest confidence in the truth and principles of her thou hast wedded, for she has

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been tried and not found wanting. Be tender to the child; she was once thy sister, and then thou used to love her."

"Mother—thou wilt make me curse the hour I was born!"

Marguerite, while she could not overcome the cold distrust which habit had interwoven with all her opinions, felt that she was cruel, and she said no more. Stooping, she kissed the cold forehead of the young man, gave a warm embrace to her daughter, over whom she prayed fervently for a minute, and then placed the insensible girl into the open arms of Adelheid. The awful workings of nature were subdued by a superhuman will, and she turned slowly toward the silent, respectful crowd, who had scarcely breathed during this exhibition of her noble character.

"Doth any here," she sternly asked, "suspect the innocence of Balthazar?"

"None, good woman, none!" returned the bailiff, wiping his eyes; "go in peace to thy home, o' Heaven's sake, and God be with thee!"

"He stands acquitted before God and man!" added the more dignified châtelain.

Marguerite motioned for Balthazar to precede her, and she prepared to quit the chapel. On the threshold she turned and cast a lingering look at Sigismund and Christine. The two latter were weeping in each other's arms, and the soul of Marguerite yearned to mingle her tears with those she loved so well. But, stern in her resolutions, she stayed the torrent of feeling which would have been so terrible in its violence had it broken loose, and followed her husband, with a dry and glowing eye. They descended the mountain with a vacuum in their hearts which taught even this persecuted pair that there are griefs in nature that surpass all the artificial woes of life.

The scene just related did not fail to disturb the spectators. Maso dashed his hand across his eyes, and seemed touched with a stronger working of sympathy than it accorded with his present policy to show, while both Conrad and Pippo did credit to their humanity, by fairly shedding tears. The latter, indeed, showed manifestations of a sensibility that is not altogether incompatible with ordinary recklessness and looseness of principle. He even begged leave to kiss the hand of the bride, wishing her joy with fervor, as one who had gone through great danger in her company. The whole party then separated with an exchange of cordial good feeling which proves that, however much men may be disposed to jostle and discompose their fellows in the great highway of life, nature has infused into their composition some great redeeming qualities to make us regret the abuses by which they have been so much perverted.

On quitting the chapel, the whole of the travellers made their dispositions to depart. The bailiff and the châtelain went down toward the Rhone, as well satisfied with themselves as if they had discharged their trust with fidelity by committing Maso to prison, and discoursing as they rode along on the singular chances which had brought a son of the Doge of Genoa before them in a condition so questionable. The good Augustines helped the travellers who were destined for the other descent into their saddles, and acquitted themselves of the last act of hospitality by following the footsteps of the mules, with wishes for their safe arrival at Aoste.

The path across the Col has been already described. It winds along the margin of the little lake, passing the site of the ancient temple of Jupiter at the distance of a few hundred yards from the convent. Sweeping past the northern extremity of the little basin, where it crosses the frontiers of Piedmont, it cuts the ragged wall of rock, and, after winding *en corniche* for a short distance by the edge of a fearful ravine, it plunges at once toward the plains of Italy.

As there was a desire to have no unnecessary witnesses of Maso's promised revelations, Conrad and Pippo had been advised to quit the mountain before the rest of the party, and the muleteers were requested to keep a little in the rear. At the point where the path leaves the lake, the whole dismounted, Pierre going ahead with the beasts, with a view to make the first precipitous pitch from the Col on foot. Maso now took the lead. When he reached the spot where the convent is last in view, he stopped and turned to gaze at the venerable and storm-beaten pile.

"Thou hesitatest," observed the Baron de

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Willading, who suspected an intention to escape.

"Signor, the look at even a stone is a melancholy office, when it is known to be the last. I have often climbed to the Col, but I shall never dare do it again; for, though the honorable and worthy châtelain, and the most worthy bailiff, are willing to pay their homage to a doge of Genoa in his own person, they may be less tender of his honor when he is absent. Addio, caro, San Bernardo! Like me, thou art solitary and weather-beaten, and, like me, though rude of aspect, thou hast thy uses. We are both beacons—thou to tell the traveller where to seek safety, and I to warn him where danger is to be avoided."

There is a dignity in manly suffering, that commands our sympathies. All who heard this apostrophe to the abode of the Augustines were struck with its simplicity and its moral. They followed the speaker in silence, however, to the point where the path makes its first sudden descent. The spot was favorable to the purpose of Il Maledetto. Though still on the level of the lake, the convent, the Col, and all it contained, with the exception of a short line of its stony path, were shut from their view, by the barrier of intervening rock. The ravine lay beneath, ragged, ferruginous, and riven into a hundred faces by the eternal action of the seasons. All above, beneath, and around, was naked, and chaotic as the elements of the globe before they received the order-giving touch of the Creator.

"Signor," said Maso, respectfully raising his cap, and speaking with calmness, "this confusion of nature resembles my own character. Here everything is torn, sterile, and wild; but patience, charity, and generous love, hath been able to change even this rocky height into an abode for those who live for the good of others. There is none so worthless that use may not be made of him. We are types of the earth, our mother; useless and savage, or repaying the labor that we receive, as we are treated like men, or hunted like beasts. If the great, and the powerful, and the honored, would become the friends and monitors of the weak and ignorant, instead of remaining so many watch-dogs to snarl at and bite all that they fear may encroach on their privileges, raising the cry of the wolf each time that they hear the wail of the timid and bleating lamb, the fairest works of God would not be so often defaced. I have lived, and it is probable that I shall die an outlaw; but the severest pangs I have ever known come from the mockery which accuses my nature of abuses that are the fruits of your own injustice. That stone," kicking a bit of rock from the path into the ravine beneath, "is as much master of its direction after my foot has set its mass in motion, as the poor untaught being who is thrown upon the world, despised, unaided, suspected, and condemned even before he has sinned, has the command of his own course. My mother was fair and good. She wanted only the power to withstand the arts of one who, honored in the opinions of all around her, undermined her virtue. He was great, noble, and powerful; while she had little beside her beauty and her weakness. Signori,—the odds against her were too much. I was the punishment of her fault. I came into a world, then, in which every man despised me before I had done any act to deserve its scorn."

"Nay, this is pushing opinions to extremes!" interrupted the Signor Grimaldi, who listened breathlessly to the syllables as they came from the other's tongue.

"We began, signori, as we have ended; distrustful, and struggling to see which could do the other the most harm. A reverend and holy monk, who knew my history, would have filled a soul with heaven that the wrongs of the world had already driven to the verge of hell. The experiment failed. Homily and precept," Maso smiled bitterly as he continued, "are but indifferent weapons to fight with against hourly wrongs; instead of becoming a cardinal and the counsellor of the head of the Church, I am the man ye see. Signor Grimaldi, the monk who gave me his care was Father Girolamo. He told the truth to thy secretary, for I am the son of poor Annunziata Altieri, who was once thought worthy to attract thy passing notice. The deception of calling myself another of thy children was practised for my own security. The means were offered by an accidental confederacy with one of the instruments of thy formidable enemy and cousin, who furnished the papers that had been taken

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with the little Gaetano. The truth of what I say shall be delivered to you at Genoa. As for the Signor Sigismondo, it is time we ceased to be rivals. We are brothers, with this difference in our fortunes, that he comes of wedlock, and I am of an unexpiated, and almost an unrepented, crime!"

A common cry, in which regret, joy, and surprise were wildly mingled, interrupted the speaker. Adelheid threw herself into her husband's arms, and the pale and conscience-stricken Doge stood with extended arms, an image of contrition, delight, and shame.

"Let me have air!" exclaimed the Prince; "give me air or I suffocate! Where is the child of Annunziata?—I will at least atone to him for the wrong done his mother!"

It was too late. The victim of another's fault had cast himself over the edge of the precipice with reckless hardihood, and he was already beyond the reach of the voice, in his swift descent, by a shorter but dangerous path, toward Aoste. Nettuno was, at his heels. It was evident that he endeavored to outstrip Pippo and Conrad, who were trudging ahead by the more beaten road. In a few minutes he turned the brow of beetling rock, and was lost to view.

This was the last that was known of Il Maledetto. At Genoa, the Doge secretly received the confirmation of all that he had heard, and Sigismund was legally placed in possession of his birthright. The latter made many generous but useless efforts to discover and to reclaim his brother. With a delicacy that could hardly be expected, the outlaw had withdrawn from a scene which he now felt to be unsuited to his habits, and he never permitted the veil to be withdrawn from the place of his retreat.

The only consolation that his relatives ever obtained arose from an event which brought Pippo under the condemnation of the law. Before his execution, the buffoon confessed that Jacques Colis fell by the hands of Conrad and himself, and that, ignorant of Maso's expedient on his own account, they had made use of Nettuno to convey the plundered jewelry undetected across the frontiers of Piedmont.

END OF "THE HEADSMAN."

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LIONEL LINCOLN.

DEDICATION.

To William Jay, of Bedford, Westchester, Esquire:

My Dear Jay: An unbroken intimacy of four-and-twenty years may justify the present use of your name. A man of readier wit than myself might, on such a subject, find an opportunity of saying something clever, concerning the exalted services of your father. No weak testimony of mine, however, can add to a fame that belongs already to posterity: and one like myself, who has so long known the merits, and has so often experienced the friendship of the son, can find even better reasons for offering these Legends to your notice.

Very truly and constantly,

Yours,

The Author.

PREFACE.

The manner in which the author became possessed of the private incidents, the characters, and the descriptions, contained in these tales, will, most probably, ever remain a secret between himself and his publisher. That the leading events are true, he presumes it is unnecessary to assert; for should inherent testimony, to prove that important point, be wanting, he is conscious that no anonymous declaration can establish its credibility.

But while he shrinks from directly yielding his authorities, the author has no hesitation in furnishing all the negative testimony in his power.

In the first place, then, he solemnly declares, that no unknown man, nor woman, has ever died in his vicinity, of whose effects he has become the possesser, by either fair means or foul. No dark-looking stranger, of a morbid temperament, and of inflexible silence, has ever transmitted to him a single page of illegible manuscript. Nor has any landlord furnished him with materials to be worked up into a book, in order that the profits might go to discharge the arrearages of a certain consumptive lodger, who made his exit so unceremoniously as to leave the last item in his account, his funeral charges.

He is indebted to no garrulous tale-teller for beguiling the long winter evenings; in ghosts he has no faith; he never had a vision in his life; and he sleeps too soundly to dream.

He is constrained to add, that in no "puff," "squib," "notice," "article," nor "review," whether in daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly publication, has he been able to find a single hint that his humble powers could improve. No one regrets this fatality more than himself; for these writers generally bring such a weight of imagination to their several tasks, that, properly improved, might secure the immortality of any book, by rendering it unintelligible.

He boldly asserts that he has derived no information from any of the learned societies —and without fear of contradiction; for why should one so obscure be the exclusive object of their favor.

Notwithstanding he occasionally is seen in that erudite and abstemious association, the "Bread-and-Cheese Lunch," where he is elbowed by lawyers, doctors, jurists, poets, painters, editors, congressmen, and authors of every shade and qualification, whether metaphysical, scientific, or imaginative, he avers, that he esteems the lore which is there culled, as far too sacred to be

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"Ye monsters in the shape of men, what is't ye do!" she exclaimed, in a voice that rose above the tumult and had the effect to hush every mouth.
—*Lionel Lincoln.*

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used in any work less dignified than actual history.

Of the colleges it is necessary to speak with reverence; though truth possesses claims even superior to gratitude. He shall dispose of them by simply saying, that they are entirely innocent of all his blunders; the little they bestowed having long since been forgotten.

He has stolen no images from the deep, natural poetry of Bryant! no pungency from the wit of Hallock; no felicity of expression from the richness of Percival; no satire from the caustic pen of Paulding; no periods nor humor from Irving; nor any high finish from the attainments exhibited by Verplanck.

At the "soirées" and "coteries des bas bleus" he did think he had obtained a prize, in the dandies of literature, who haunt them. But experiment and analysis detected his error; as they proved these worthies unfit for any better purpose than that which there own instinct had already dictated.

He has made no impious attempt to rob Joe Miller of his jokes; the sentimentalists of their pathos, nor the newspaper Homers of their lofty inspirations.

His presumption has not even imagined the vivacity of the eastern states; he has not analyzed the homogeneous character of the middle; and he has left the south in undisturbed possession of all their saturnine wit.

In short—he has pilfered from no black-letter book, nor any six-penny pamphlet; his grandmother unnaturally refused her assistance to his labors; and, to speak affirmatively, for once, he wishes to live in peace, and hopes to die in the fear of God.

INTRODUCTION.

In this tale there are one or two slight anachronisms; which, if unnoticed, might, with literal readers, draw some unpleasant imputations on its veracity. They relate rather to persons than to things. As they are believed to be quite in character, connected with circumstances much more probable than facts, and to possess all the harmony of poetic coloring, the author is utterly unable to discover the reason why they are not true.

He leaves the knotty point to the instinctive sagacity of the critics.

The matter of this "Legend" may be pretty equally divided into that which is publicly, and that which is privately certain. For the authorities of the latter, the author refers to the foregoing preface; but he cannot dispose of the sources whence he has derived the former, with so little ceremony.

The good people of Boston are aware of the creditable appearance they make in the early annals of the confederation, and they neglect no commendable means to perpetuate the glories of their ancestors. In consequence, the inquiry after historical facts is answered, there, by an exhibition of local publications, that no other town in the Union can equal. Of these means the author has endeavored to avail himself; collating with care, and selecting, as he trusts, with some of that knowledge of men and things which is necessary to present a faithful picture.

Wherever he may have failed, he has done it honestly.

He will not take leave of the "cradle of liberty," without expressing his thanks for the facilities which have been so freely accorded to his undertaking. If he has not been visited by aërial beings, and those fair visions that poets best love to create, he is certain he will not be misconceived when he says, that he has been honored by the notice of some resembling those who first inspired their fancies.

CHAPTER I.

"My weary soul they seem to soothe,
And, redolent of joy and youth,
To breathe a second spring."—GRAY.

No American can be ignorant of the principal events that induced the Parliament of Great Britain, in 1774, to lay those impolitic restrictions on the port of Boston, which so effectually destroyed the trade of the chief town in her western colonies. Nor should it be unknown to any American, how nobly, and with what devotedness to the great principles of the controversy, the inhabitants of

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the adjacent town of Salem refused to profit by the situation of their neighbors and fellow-subjects. In consequence of these impolitic measures of the English government, and of the laudable unanimity among the capitalists of the times, it became a rare sight to see the canvas of any other vessels than such as wore the pennants of the king, whitening the forsaken waters of Massachusetts Bay.

Toward the decline of a day in April, 1775, however, the eyes of hundreds had been fastened on a distant sail, which was seen rising from the bosom of the waves, making her way along the forbidden track, and steering directly for the mouth of the proscribed haven. With that deep solicitude in passing events which marked the period, a large group of spectators was collected on Beacon Hill, spreading from its conical summit far down the eastern declivity, all gazing intently on the object of their common interest. In so large an assemblage, however, there were those who were excited by very different feelings, and indulging in wishes directly opposite to each other. While the decent, grave, but wary citizen was endeavoring to conceal the bitterness of the sensations which soured his mind, under the appearance of a cold indifference, a few gay young men, who mingled in the throng, bearing about their persons the trappings of their martial profession, were loud in their exultations, and hearty in their congratulations on the prospect of hearing from their distant homes and absent friends. But the long, loud rolls of the drums, ascending on the evening air, from the adjacent common, soon called these idle spectators, in a body, from the spot, when the hill was left to the quiet possession of those who claimed the strongest right to its enjoyment. It was not, however, a period for open and unreserved communications. Long before the mists of evening had succeeded the shadows thrown from the setting sun, the hill was entirely deserted; the remainder of the spectators having descended from the eminence, and held their several courses, singly, silent, and thoughtful, toward the rows of dusky roofs that covered the lowland, along the eastern side of the peninsula. Notwithstanding this appearance of apathy, rumor, which, in times of great excitement, ever finds means to convey its whisperings, when it dare not bruit its information aloud, was busy in circulating the unwelcome intelligence that the stranger was the first of a fleet, bringing stores and reinforcements to an army already too numerous, and too confident of its power, to respect the law. No tumult or noise succeeded this unpleasant annunciation, but the doors of the houses were sullenly closed, and the windows darkened, as if the people intended to express their dissatisfaction, alone, by these silent testimonials of their disgust.

In the meantime the ship had gained the rocky entrance to the harbor, where, deserted by the breeze, and met by an adverse tide, she lay inactive, as if conscious of the unwelcome reception she must receive. The fears of the inhabitants of Boston had, however, exaggerated the danger; for the vessel, instead of exhibiting the confused and disorderly throng of licentious soldiery, which would have crowded a transport, was but thinly peopled, and her orderly decks were cleared of every incumbrance that could interfere with the comfort of those she did contain. There was an appearance, in the arrangements of her external accommodations, which would have indicated to an observant eye that she carried those who claimed the rank, or possessed the means, of making others contribute largely to their comforts. The few seamen who navigated the ship lay extended on different portions of the vessel, watching the lazy sails as they flapped against the masts, or indolently bending their looks on the placid waters of the bay; while several menials, in livery, crowded around a young man who was putting his eager inquiries to the pilot, that had just boarded the vessel off the Graves. The dress of this youth was studiously neat, and from the excessive pains bestowed on its adjustment, it was obviously deemed, by its wearer, to be in the height of the prevailing customs. From the place where this inquisitive party stood, nigh the main-mast, a wide sweep of the quarter-deck was untenanted; but nearer to the spot where the listless seamen hung idly over the tiller of the ship, stood a being of altogether different mould and fashion. He was a man who would have seemed in the very extremity of age, had not his quick, vigorous steps, and the glowing, rapid glances from his eyes, as

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he occasionally paced the deck, appeared to deny the usual indications of many years. His form was bowed, and attenuated nearly to emaciation. His hair, which fluttered a little wildly around his temples, was thin, and silvered to the whiteness of at least eighty winters. Deep furrows, like the lines of great age and long-endured cares united, wrinkled his hollow cheeks, and rendered the bold haughty outline of his prominent features still more remarkable. He was clad in a simple and somewhat tarnished suit of modest gray, which bore about it the ill-concealed marks of long and neglected use. Whenever he turned his piercing look from the shores, he moved swiftly along the deserted quarter-deck, and seemed entirely engrossed with the force of his own thoughts, his lips moving rapidly, though no sounds were heard to issue from a mouth that was habitually silent. He was under the influence of one of those sudden impulses, in which the body, apparently, sympathizes so keenly with the restless activity of the mind, when a young man ascended from the cabin and took his stand among the interested and excited gazers at the land, on the upper deck. The age of this gentleman might have been five and twenty. He wore a military cloak, thrown carelessly across his form, which, in addition to such parts of his dress as were visible through its open folds, sufficiently announced that his profession was that of arms. There was an air of ease and high fashion gleaming about his person, though his speaking countenance, at times, seemed melancholy, if not sad. On gaining the deck, this young officer, encountering the eyes of the aged and restless being who trod its planks, bowed courteously before he turned away to the view, and in his turn became deeply absorbed in studying its fading beauties.

The rounded heights of Dorchester were radiant with the rays of the luminary that had just sunk behind their crest, and streaks of paler light were playing along the waters, and gilding the green summits of the islands which clustered across the mouth of the estuary. Far in the distance were to be seen the tall spires of the churches, rising out of the deep shadows of the town, with their vanes glittering in the sunbeams, while a few rays of strong light were dancing about the black beacon, which reared itself high above the conical peak, that took its name from the circumstance of supporting this instrument of alarms. Several large vessels were anchored among the islands and before the town, their dark hulls, at each moment, becoming less distinct through the haze of evening, while the summits of their long lines of masts were yet glowing with the marks of day. From each of these sullen ships, from the low fortification which rose above a small island deep in the bay, and from various elevations in the town itself, the broad, silky folds of the flag of England were yet waving in the currents of the passing air. The young man was suddenly aroused from gazing at this scene, by the quick reports of the evening guns, and while his eyes were yet tracing the descent of the proud symbols of the British power from their respective places of display, he felt his arm convulsively pressed by the hand of his aged fellow-passenger.

"Will the day ever arrive," said a low, hollow voice at his elbow, "when those flags shall be lowered, never to rise again in this hemisphere?"

The young soldier turned his quick eyes to the countenance of the speaker, but bent them instantly in embarrassment on the deck, to avoid the keen, searching glance he encountered in the looks of the other. A long, and, on the part of the young man, a painful silence succeeded this remark. At length the youth, pointing to the land, said—

"Tell me, you who are of Boston, and must have known it so long, the names of all these beautiful places I see."

"And are you not of Boston, too?" asked his old companion.

"Certainly by birth, but an Englishman by habit and education."

"Accursed be the habits, and neglected the education, which would teach a child to forget its parentage!" muttered the old man, turning suddenly, and walking away so rapidly as to be soon lost in the forward parts of the ship.

For several minutes longer the youth stood absorbed in his own musings, when, as if recollecting his previous purposes, he called aloud—"Meriton!"

At the sounds of his voice the curious group around the pilot instantly separated,

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and the highly ornamented youth, before mentioned, approached the officer, with a manner in which pert familiarity and fearful respect were peculiarly blended. Without regarding the air of the other, however, or indeed without even favoring him with a glance, the young soldier continued—

"I desired you to detain the boat which boarded us, in order to convey me to the town, Mr. Meriton; see if it be in readiness."

The valet flew to execute this commission, and in an instant returned with a reply in the affirmative.

"But, sir," he continued, "you will never think of going in that boat, I feel very much assured, sir."

"Your assurance, Mr. Meriton, is not the least of your recommendations; why should I not?"

"That disagreeable old stranger has taken possession of it, with his mean, filthy bundle of rags; and——"

"And what? you must name a greater evil, to detain me here, than mentioning the fact that the only gentleman in the ship is to be my companion."

"Lord, sir!" said Meriton, glancing his eye upward in amazement; "but, sir, surely you know best as to gentility of behavior—but as to gentility of dress——"

"Enough of this," interrupted his master, a little angrily; "the company is such as I am content with; if you find it unequal to your deserts, you have my permission to remain in the ship until the morning—the presence of a coxcomb is by no means necessary to my comfort for one night."

Without regarding the mortification of his disconcerted valet, the young man passed along the deck to the place where the boat was waiting. By the general movement among the indolent menials, and the profound respect with which he was attended by the master of the ship to the gangway, it was sufficiently apparent, that, notwithstanding his youth, it was this gentleman whose presence had exacted those arrangements in the ship, which have been mentioned. While all around him, however, were busy in facilitating the entrance of the officer into the boat, the aged stranger occupied its principal seat, with an air of deep abstraction, if not of cool indifference. A hint from the pliant Meriton, who had ventured to follow his master, that it would be more agreeable if he would relinquish his place, was disregarded, and the youth took a seat by the side of the old man, with a simplicity of manner that his valet inwardly pronounced abundantly degrading. As if this humiliation were not sufficient, the young man, perceiving that a general pause had succeeded his own entrance, turned to his companion, and courteously inquired if he were ready to proceed. A silent wave of the hand was the reply, when the boat shot away from the vessel, leaving the ship steering for an anchorage in Nantasket.

The measured dash of the oars was uninterrupted by any voice, while, stemming the tide, they pulled laboriously up among the islands; but by the time they had reached the castle, the twilight had melted into the softer beams from a young moon, and the surrounding objects becoming more distinct, the stranger commenced talking with that quick and startling vehemence which seemed his natural manner. He spoke of the localities, with the vehemence and fondness of an enthusiast, and with the familiarity of one who had long known their beauties. His rapid utterance, however, ceased as they approached the naked wharves, and he sunk back gloomily in the boat, as if unwilling to trust his voice on the subject of his country's wrongs. Thus left to his own thoughts, the youth gazed, with eager interest, at the long ranges of buildings, which were now clearly visible to the eye, though with softer colors and more gloomy shadows. A few neglected and dismantled ships were lying at different points; but the hum of business, the forests of masts, and the rattling of wheels, which at that early hour should have distinguished the great mart of the colonies, were wanting. In their places were to be heard, at intervals, the sudden bursts of distant, martial music, the riotous merriment of the soldiery who frequented the taverns at the water's edge, or the sullen challenges of the sentries from the vessels of war, as they vexed the progress of the few boats which the inhabitants still used in their ordinary pursuits.

"Here indeed is a change!" the young officer exclaimed, as they glided swiftly along this desolate scene; "even my recollections

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young and fading as they are, recall the difference!"

The stranger made no reply, but a smile of singular meaning gleamed across his wan features, imparting, by the moonlight, to their remarkable expression, a character of additional wildness. The officer was again silent, nor did either speak until the boat, having shot by the end of the long wharf, across whose naked boundaries a sentinel was pacing his measured path, inclined more to the shore, and soon reached the place of its destination.

Whatever might have been the respective feelings of the two passengers, at having thus reached in safety the object of their tiresome and protracted voyage, they were not expressed in language. The old man bared his silver locks, and, concealing his face with his hat, stood as if in deep mental thanksgiving at the termination of his toil, while his more youthful companion trod the wharf on which they landed with the air of a man whose emotions were too engrossing for the ordinary use of words.

"Here we must part, sir," the officer at length said; "but I trust the acquaintance, which has been thus accidentally formed between us, is not to be forgotten now there is an end to our common privations."

"It is not in the power of a man whose days, like mine, are numbered," returned the stranger, "to mock the liberality of his God, by any vain promises that must depend on time for their fulfilment. I am one, young gentleman, who has returned from a sad, sad pilgrimage, in the other hemisphere, to lay his bones in this, his native land; but should many hours be granted me, you will hear further of the man whom your courtesy and kindness have so greatly obliged."

The officer was sensibly affected by the softened but solemn manner of his companion, and pressed his wasted hand fervently as he answered—

"Do; I ask it as a singular favor; I know not why, but you have obtained a command of my feelings that no other being ever yet possessed—and yet—'tis a mystery, 'tis like a dream! I feel that I not only venerate, but love you!"

The old man stepped back, and held the youth at the length of his arm a moment, while he fastened on him a look of glowing interest, and then, raising his hand slowly, he pointed impressively upward, and said—

"'Tis from heaven, and for God's own purposes—smother not the sentiment, boy, but cherish it in your heart's core!"

The reply of the youth was interrupted by sudden and violent shrieks, that burst rudely on the stillness of the place, chilling the very blood of those who heard them, with their piteousness. The quick and severe blows of a lash were blended with the exclamations of the sufferer, and rude oaths, with hoarse execrations, from various voices, were united in the uproar, which appeared to be at no great distance. By a common impulse, the whole party broke away from the spot, and moved rapidly up the wharf in the direction of the sounds. As they approached the buildings, a group was seen collected around the man, who thus broke the charm of evening by his cries, interrupting his wailings with their ribaldry, and encouraging his tormentors to proceed.

"Mercy, mercy, for the sake of the blessed God, have mercy, and don't kill Job!" again shrieked the sufferer; "Job will run your a'r'nds! Job is half-witted! Mercy on poor Job! Oh! you make his flesh creep!"

"I'll cut the heart from the mutinous knave," interrupted a hoarse, angry voice, "to refuse to drink the health of his majesty!"

"Job does wish him good health—Job loves the king—only Job don't love rum."

The officer had approached so nigh as to perceive that the whole scene was one of disorder and abuse, and pushing aside the crowd of excited and deriding soldiers, who composed the throng, he broke at once into the centre of the circle.

CHAPTER II.

They'll have me whipped for speaking true;
Thoul't have me whipped for lying;
And sometimes I'm whipped for holding my peace.
I had rather be any kind of a thing
Than a fool."—*Lear.*

"WHAT means this outcry?" demanded the young man, arresting the arm of an infuriated soldier, who was inflicting the blows; "by what authority is this man thus abused?"

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"By what authority dare you lay hands on a British grenadier?" cried the fellow, turning in his fury, and raising his lash against the supposed townsman. But when, as the officer stepped aside to avoid the threatened indignity, the light of the moon fell full upon his glittering dress, through the opening folds of his cloak, the arm of the brutal soldier was held suspended in air, with the surprise of the discovery.

"Answer, I bid you," continued the young officer, his frame shaking with passion; "why is this man tormented, and of what regiment are ye?"

"We belong to the grenadiers of the brave 47th, your honor," returned one of the bystanders, in a humble, deprecating tone, "and we was just polishing this 'ere natural, because as he refuses to drink the health of his majesty."

"He's a scornful sinner, that don't fear his Maker," cried the man in duress, eagerly bending his face, down which big tears were rolling, towards his protector. "Job loves the king, but Job don't love rum!"

The officer turned away from the cruel spectacle, as he bid the men untie the prisoner. Knives and fingers were instantly put in requisition, and the man was liberated, and suffered to resume his clothes. During this operation, the tumult and bustle, which had so recently distinguished the riotous scene, were succeeded by a stillness that rendered the hard breathing of the sufferer painfully audible.

"Now sirs, you heroes of the 47th!" said the young man, when the victim of their rage was again clad, "know you this button?" The soldier, to whom this question was more particularly addressed, gazed at the extended arm, and, to his vast discomfiture, he beheld the magical number of his own regiment reposing on the well-known white facings that decorated the rich scarlet of the vestment. No one presumed to answer this appeal, and after an impressive silence of a few moments, he continued—

"Ye are noble supporters of the well-earned frame of 'Wolfe's own!' fit successors to the gallant men who conquered under the walls of Quebec! away with ye; to-morrow it shall be looked to."

"I hope your honor will remember he refused his majesty's health. I'm sure, sir, that if Colonel Nesbitt was here himself——"

"Dog! do you dare to hesitate! go, while you have permission to depart."

The disconcerted soldiery, whose turbulence had thus vanished, as if by enchantment, before the frown of their superior, slunk away in a body, a few of the older men whispering to their comrades the name of the officer, who had thus unexpectedly appeared in the midst of them. The angry eye of the young soldier followed their retiring forms, while a man of them was visible; after which, turning to an elderly citizen, who, supported on a crutch, had been a spectator of the scene, he asked—

"Know you the cause of the cruel treatment this poor man has received? or what in any manner has led to the violence?"

"The boy is weak," returned the cripple; "quite an innocent, who knows but little good, but does no harm. The soldiers have been carousing in yonder dram-shop, and they often get the poor lad in with them, and sport with his infirmity. If these sorts of doings an't checked, I fear much trouble will grow out of them! Hard laws from t'other side of the water, and tarring and feathering on this, with gentlemen like Colonel Nesbitt at their head, will——"

"It is wisest for us, my friend, to pursue this subject no further," interrupted the officer. "I belong myself to 'Wolfe's own,' and will endeavor to see justice done in the matter; as you will credit when I tell you that I am a Boston boy. But, though a native, a long absence has obliterated the marks of the town from my memory; and I am at a loss to thread these crooked streets. Know you the dwelling of Mrs. Lechmere?"

"The house is well known to all in Boston," returned the cripple, in a voice sensibly altered by the information that he was speaking to a townsman. "Job, here, does but little else than run of errands, and he will show you the way out of gratitude; won't you, Job?"

The idiot,—for the vacant eye and unmeaning boyish countenance of the young man who had just been liberated but too plainly indicated that he was to be included in that miserable class of human beings,—answered with a caution and reluctance that were a

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little remarkable, considering the recent circumstances.

"Ma'am Lechmere's! Oh! yes, Job knows the way, and could go there blindfolded, if—if——"

"If what, you simpleton!" exclaimed the zealous cripple.

"Why, if 'twas daylight."

"Blindfolded, and daylight! do but hear the silly child! Come, Job, you must take this gentleman to Tremont Street, without further words. 'Tis but just sundown, boy, and you can go there and be home and in your bed before the Old South strikes eight!"

"Yes; that all depends on which way you go," returned the reluctant changeling. "Now, I know, neighbor Hopper, you couldn't go to Ma'am Lechmere's in an hour, if you went along Lynn Street, and so along Prince Street, and back through Snow Hill; and especially if you should stop any time to look at the graves on Copp's."

"Pshaw! the fool is in one of his sulks now, with his Copp's-Hill and the graves!" interrupted the cripple, whose heart had warmed to his youthful townsman, and who would have volunteered to show the way himself, had his infirmities permitted the exertion. "The gentleman must call the grenadiers back, to bring the child to reason."

"'Tis quite unnecessary to be harsh with the unfortunate lad," said the young soldier; "my recollections will probably aid me as I advance; and should they not, I can inquire of any passenger I meet."

"If Boston was what Boston has been, you might ask such a question of a civil inhabitant, at any corner," said the cripple; "but it's rare to see many of our people in the streets at this hour, since the massacre. Besides, it is Saturday night, you know; a fit time for these rioters to choose for their revelries! For that matter, the soldiers have grown more insolent than ever, since they have met that disappointment about the cannon down at Salem; but I needn't tell such as you what the soldiers are when they get a little savage."

"I know my comrades but indifferently well, if their conduct to-night be any specimen of their ordinary demeanor, sir," returned the officer; "but follow, Meriton; I apprehend no great difficulty in our path."

The pliant valet lifted the cloak-bag he carried, from the ground, and they were about to proceed, when the natural edged himself in a sidelong, slovenly manner, nigher to the gentleman, and looked earnestly up in his face for a moment, where he seemed to be gathering confidence to say—"Job will show the officer Ma'am Lechmere's, if the officer won't let the grannies catch Job afore he gets off the North End ag'in."

"Ah!" said the young man, laughing, "there is something of the cunning of a fool in that arrangement. Well, I accept the conditions; but beware how you take me to contemplate the graves by moonlight, or I shall deliver you not only to the grannies, but to the light infantry, artillery, and all."

With this good-natured threat, the officer followed his nimble conductor, after taking a friendly leave of the obliging cripple, who continued his admonitions to the natural, not to wander from the direct route, while the sounds of his voice were audible to the retiring party. The progress of his guide was so rapid as to require the young officer to confine his survey of the narrow and crooked streets through which they passed, to extremely hasty and imperfect glances. No very minute observation, however, was necessary to perceive that he was led along one of the most filthy and inferior sections of the town; and where, notwithstanding his efforts, he found it impossible to recall a single feature of his native place to his remembrance. The complaints of Meriton, who followed close at the heels of his master, were loud and frequent, until the gentleman, a little doubting the sincerity of his intractable conductor, exclaimed—

"Have you nothing better than this to show a townsman, who has been absent seventeen years, on his return? Pray let us go through some better streets than this, if any there are in Boston which can be called better."

The lad stopped short, and looked up in the face of the speaker, for an instant, with an air of undisguised amazement, and then, without replying, he changed the direction of his route, and after one or two more deviations in his path, suddenly turning again, he glided up an alley, so narrow that the passenger might touch the buildings on

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either side of him. The officer hesitated an instant to enter this dark and crooked passage, but perceiving that his guide was already hid by a bend in the houses, he quickened his steps, and immediately regained the ground he had lost. They soon emerged from the obscurity of the place, and issued on a street of greater width.

"There!" said Job, triumphantly, when they had effected this gloomy passage, "does the king live in so crooked and narrow a street as that?"

"His majesty must yield the point in your favor," returned the officer.

"Ma'am Lechmere is a grand lady!" continued the lad, seemingly following the current of his own fanciful conceits, "and she wouldn't live in that alley for the world, though it is narrow like the road to heaven, as old Nab says; I suppose they call it after the Methodies for that reason."

"I have heard the road you mention termed narrow, certainly, but it is also called *strait*," returned the officer, a little amused with the humor of the lad; "but forward, the time is slipping away, and we loiter."

Again Job turned, and moving onward, he led the way, with swift steps, along another narrow and crooked path, which, however, better deserved the name of a street, under the projecting stories of the wooden buildings, which lined its sides. After following the irregular windings of their route for some distance, they entered a triangular area, of a few rods in extent, where Job, disregarding the use of the narrow walk, advanced directly into the centre of the open space. Here he stopped once more, and, turning his vacant face with an air of much seriousness, toward a building which composed one side of the triangle, he said, with a voice that expressed his own deep admiration—

"There—that's the 'Old North!' did you ever see such a meetin'us' afore? does the king worship God in such a temple?"

The officer did not chide the idle liberties of the fool, for in the antiquated and quaint architecture of the wooden edifice he recognized one of those early efforts of the simple, puritan builders, whose rude tastes have been transmitted to their posterity with so many deviations in the style of the same school, but so little of improvement. Blended with these considerations, were the dawnings of revived recollections; and he smiled, as he recalled the time when he also used to look up at the building with feelings somewhat allied to the profound admiration of the idiot. Job watched his countenance narrowly, and easily mistaking its expression, he extended his arm toward one of the narrowest of the avenues that entered the area, where stood a few houses of more than common pretension.

"And there ag'in!" he continued, "there's palaces for you! stingy Tommy lived in the one with the pile-axters, and the flowers hanging to their tops; and see the crowns on them too! stingy Tommy loved crowns, they say; but Province'us' wasn't good enough for him, and he lived here—now they say he lives in one of the king's cupboards!"

"And who was stingy Tommy? and what right had he to dwell in Province-House, if he would?"

"What right has any governor to live in Province'us'? because it's the king's! though the people paid for it."

"Pray, sir, excuse me," said Meriton, from behind, "but do the Americans usually call all their governors stingy Tommies?"

The officer turned his head, at this vapid question, from his valet, and perceived that he had been accompanied thus far by the aged stranger, who stood at his elbow, leaning on his staff, studying with close attention the late dwelling of Hutchinson, while the light of the moon fell, unobstructed, on the deep lines of his haggard face. During the first surprise of this discovery, he forgot to reply, and Job took the vindication of his language into his own hands.

"To be sure they do—they call people by their right names," he said. "Insygn Peck is called Insygn Peck; and you call Deacon Winslow anything but Deacon Winslow, and see what a look he'll give you! and I am Job Pray, so called; and why shouldn't a governor be called stingy Tommy, if he is a stingy Tommy?"

"Be careful how you speak lightly of the king's representative," said the young officer, raising his light cane with the affectation of correcting the changeling.—"Forget you that I am a soldier?"

The idiot shrunk back a little, timidly,

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and then leering from under his sunken brow, he answered—

"I heard you say you were a Boston boy!"

The gentleman was about to make a playful reply, when the aged stranger passed quickly before him, and took his stand at the side of the lad, with a manner so remarkable for its earnestness, that it entirely changed the current of his thoughts.

"The young man knows the ties of blood and country," the stranger muttered, "and I honor him!"

It might have been the sudden recollection of the danger of those allusions, which the officer so well understood, and to which his accidental association with the singular being who uttered them had begun to familiarize his ear, that induced the youth to resume his walk, silently, and in deep thought, along the street. By this movement, he escaped observing the cordial grasp of the hand which the old stranger bestowed on the idiot, while he muttered a few more terms of commendation. Job soon took his station in front, and the whole party moved on again, though with less rapid strides. As the lad advanced deeper into the town, he evidently wavered once or twice in his choice of streets, and the officer began to suspect that the changeling contemplated one of his wild circuits, to avoid the direct route to a house that he manifestly approached with great reluctance. Once or twice the young soldier looked about him, intending to inquire the direction, of the first passenger he might see; but the quiet of deep night already pervaded the place, and not an individual, but those who accompanied him, appeared in the long ranges of streets they had passed. The air of the guide was becoming so dogged, and hesitating, that his follower had just determined to make an application at one of the doors, when they emerged from a dark, dirty, and gloomy street on an open space, of much greater extent than the one they had so recently left. Passing under the walls of a blackened dwelling, Job led the way to the centre of a swinging bridge, which was thrown across an inlet from the harbor, that extended a short distance into the area, forming a shallow dock. Here he took his stand, and allowed the view of the surrounding objects to work its own effect on those he had conducted thither. The square was composed of rows of low, gloomy, and irregular houses, most of which had the appearance of being but little used. Stretching from the end of the basin, and a little on one side, a long, narrow edifice, ornamented with pilasters, perforated with arched windows, and surmounted by a humble cupola, reared its walls of brick, under the light of the moon. The story which held the rows of silent, glistening windows, was supported on abutments and arches of the same material, through the narrow vistas of which were to be seen the shambles of the common market-place. Heavy cornices of stone were laid above and beneath the pilasters, and something more than the unskilful architecture of the dwelling-houses they had passed, was affected throughout the whole structure. While the officer gazed at this scene, the idiot watched his countenance with a keenness exceeding his usual observation, until, impatient at hearing no words of pleasure or of recognition, he exclaimed—

"If you don't know Funnel Hall, you are no Boston boy!"

"But I do know Faneuil Hall, and I am a Boston boy," returned the amused gentleman; "the place begins to freshen on my memory, and I now recall the scenes of my childhood."

"This, then," said the aged stranger, "is the spot where liberty has found so many bold advocates!"

"It would do the king's heart good to hear the people talk in old Funnel, sometimes," said Job. "I was on the cornishes, and looked into the winders, the last town-meetin'-da', and if there was soldiers on the Common, there was them in the hall that didn't care for them!"

"All this is very amusing, no doubt," said the officer, gravely, "but it does not advance me a foot on my way to Mrs. Lechmere's."

"It is also instructing," exclaimed the stranger; "go on, child; I love to hear his simple feelings thus expressed; they indicate the state of the public mind."

"Why," said Job, "they were plain spoken, that's all; and it would be better for the king to come over, and hear them—it would pull down his pride, and make him pity the people, and then he wouldn't think of shutting up Boston harbor. Suppose he should stop the water from coming in by the Narrows,

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why, we should get it by Broad Sound! and if it didn't come by Broad Sound it would by Nantasket! He needn't think that the Boston folks are so dumb as to be cheated out of God's water by acts of Parliament, while old Funnel stands in the Dock Square!"

"Sirrah!" exclaimed the officer, a little angrily, "we have already loitered until the clocks are striking eight."

The idiot lost his animation, and lowered in his looks again, as he answered—

"Well, I told neighbor Hopper there was more ways to Ma'am Lechmere's than straight forward! but everybody knows Job's business better than Job himself! now you make me forget the road; let us go in and ask old Nab; she knows the way too well!"

"Old Nab! you wilful dolt! who is Nab, and what have I to do with any but yourself?"

"Everybody in Boston knows Abigail Pray."

"What of her?" asked the startling voice of the stranger; "what of Abigail Pray, boy; is she not honest?"

"Yes, as poverty can make her," returned the natural, gloomily; "now the king has said there shall be no goods but tea sent to Boston, and the people won't have the bohea, it's easy living rent-free.—Nab keeps her huckster-stuff in the old ware'us', and a good place it is too—Job and his mother have each a room to sleep in, and they say the king and queen haven't more!"

While he was speaking, the eyes of his listeners were drawn by his gestures toward the singular edifice to which he alluded. Like most of the others adjacent to the square, it was low, old, dirty, and dark. Its shape was triangular, a street bounding it on each side, and its extremities were flanked by as many low hexagonal towers, which terminated, like the main building itself, in high pointed roofs, tiled, and capped with rude ornaments. Long ranges of small windows were to be seen in the dusky walls, through one of which the light of a solitary candle was glimmering, the only indication of the presence of life about the silent and gloomy building.

"Nab knows Ma'am Lechmere better than Job," continued the idiot, after a moment's pause, "and she will know whether Ma'am Lechmere will have Job whipped for bringing company on Saturday night; though they say she's so full of scoffery as to talk, drink tea, and laugh on that night, just the same as any other time."

"I will pledge myself to her courteous treatment," the officer replied, beginning to be weary of the fool's delay.

"Let us see this Abigail Pray," cried the aged stranger, suddenly seizing Job by the arm, and leading him, with a sort of irresistible power, toward the walls of the building, through one of the low doors of which they immediately disappeared.

Thus left on the bridge, with his valet, the young officer hesitated a single instant how to act; but yielding to the secret and powerful interest, which the stranger had succeeded in throwing around all his movements and opinions, he bade Meriton await his return, and followed his guide and the old man into the cheerless habitation of the former. On passing the outer door, he found himself in a spacious, but rude apartment, which, from its appearance, as well as from the few articles of heavy but valueless merchandise it now contained, would seem to have been used once as a storehouse. The light drew his steps toward a room in one of the towers, where, as he approached its open door, he heard the loud, sharp tones of a woman's voice, exclaiming—

"Where have you been, graceless, this Saturday night! tagging at the heels of the soldiers, or gazing at the men-of-war, with their ungodly fashions of music and revelry at such a time, I dare to say! and you knew that a ship was in the bay, and that Madam Lechmere had desired me to send her the first notice of its arrival. Here have I been waiting for you to go up to Tremont Street since sundown, with the news, and you are out of call—you, that know so well who it is she expects!"

"Don't be cross to Job, mother, for the grannies have been cutting his back with cords, till the blood runs! Ma'am Lechmere! I do believe, mother, that Ma'am Lechmere has moved; for I've been trying to find her house this hour, because there's a gentleman who landed from the ship wanted Job to show him the way."

"What means the ignorant boy!" exclaimed his mother.

"He alludes to me," said the officer, en-

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tering the apartment; "I am the person, if any, expected by Mrs. Lechmere, and have just landed from the Avon, of Bristol; but your son has led me a circuitous path indeed; at one time he spoke of visiting the graves on Copp's Hill."

"Excuse the ignorant and witless child, sir," exclaimed the matron, eyeing the young man keenly through her spectacles; "he knows the way as well as to his own bed, but he is wilful at times. This will be a joyful night in Tremont Street! So handsome, and so stately too! Excuse me, young gentleman," she added, raising the candle to his features with an evident unconsciousness of the act—"he has the sweet smile of the mother, and the terrible eye of his father! God forgive us all our sins, and make us happier in another world than in this place of evil and wickedness!" As she muttered the latter words, the woman set aside her candle with an air of singular agitation. Each syllable, notwithstanding her secret intention, was heard by the officer, across whose countenanse there passed a sudden gloom that doubled its sad expression. He, however, said—

"You know me, and my family, then?"

"I was at your birth, young gentleman, and a joyful birth it was! but Madam Lechmere waits for the news, and my unfortunate child shall speedily conduct you to her door; she will tell you all that it is proper to know. Job, you Job, where are you getting to, in that corner! take your hat, and show the gentleman to Tremont Street directly; you know, my son, you love to go to Madam Lechmere's!"

"Job would never go, if Job could help it," muttered the sullen boy; "and if Nab had never gone, 'twould have been better for her soul."

"Do you dare, disrespectful viper!" exclaimed the angry quean, seizing, in the violence of her fury, the tongs, and threatening the head of her stubborn child.

"Woman, peace!" said a voice behind.

The dangerous weapon fell from the nerveless hand of the vixen, and the hues of her yellow and withered countenance changed to the whiteness of death. She stood motionless, for near a minute, as if riveted to the spot by a superhuman power, before she succeeded in muttering "who speaks to me?"

"It is I," returned the stranger, advancing from the shadow of the door into the dim light of the candle; "a man who has numbered ages, and who knows, that as God loves him, so is he bound to love the children of his loins."

The rigid limbs of the woman lost their stability, in tremor that shook every fibre in her body; she sunk in her chair, and her eyes rolled from the face of one visitor to that of the other, while her unsuccessful efforts to utter, denoted that she had temporarily lost the command of speech. Job stole to the side of the stranger, in this short interval, and looking up in his face piteously, he said—

"Don't hurt old Nab—read that good saying to her out of the Bible, and she'll never strike Job with the tongs ag'in; will you, mother? See her cup, where she hid it under the towel, when you came in! Ma'am Lechmere gives her the p'ison tea to drink, and then Nab is never so good to Job, as Job, would be to mother, if mother was half-witted, and Job was old Nab."

The stranger considered the moving countenance of the boy, while he pleaded thus earnestly in behalf of his mother, with marked attention, and when he had done, he stroked the head of the natural compassionately, and said—

"Poor, imbecile child! God has denied the most precious of his gifts, and yet his spirit hovers around thee; for thou canst distinguish between austerity and kindness, and thou hast learnt to know good from evil. Young man, see you no moral in this dispensation? nothing which says that Providence bestows no gift in vain; while it points to the difference between the duty that is fostered by indulgence, and that which is extorted by power?"

The officer avoided the ardent looks of the stranger, and after an embarrassing pause of a moment, he expressed his readiness, to the reviving woman, to depart on his way. The matron, whose eye had never ceased to dwell on the features of the old man, since her faculties were restored, arose slowly, and in a feeble voice directed her son to show the road to Tremont Street. She had acquired, by long practice a manner that never failed

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to control, when necessary, the wayward humors of her child, and on the present occasion, the unwonted solemnity imparted to the voice, by deep agitation, aided in effecting her object. Job quietly arose, and prepared himself to comply. The manners of the whole party wore a restraint, which implied thay had touched on feelings that it would be wiser to smother, and the separation would have been silent, though courteous, on the part of the youth, had he not perceived the passage still filled by the motionless form of the stranger.

"You will precede me, sir," he said; "the hour grows late, and you, too, may need a guide to find your dwelling."

"To me, the streets of Boston have long been familiar," returned the old man. "I have noted the increase of the town as a parent notes the increasing stature of his child; nor is my love for it less than paternal. It is enough that I am within its limits, where liberty is prized as the greatest good; and it matters not under what roof I lay my head —this will do as well as another."

"This!" echoed the other, glancing his eyes over the miserable furniture, and scanning the air of poverty that pervaded the place; "why, this house has even less of comfort than the ship we have left!"

"It has enough for my wants," said the stranger, seating himself with composure, and deliberately placing his bundle by his side. "Go you to your palace in Tremont Street: it shall be my care that we meet again."

The officer understood the character of his companion too well to hesitate, and bending low, he quitted the apartment, leaving the other leaning his head on his cane, in absent musing, while the amazed matron was gazing at her unexpected guest, with a wonder that was not unmingled with dread.

CHAPTER III.

"From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
While China's earth receives the smoking tide.
At once they gratify their scent and taste,
And frequent cups prolong the rich repast."
—*Rape of the Lock.*

THE recollection of the repeated admonitions of his mother, served to keep Job to his purpose. The instant the officer appeared, he held his way across the bridge, and after proceeding, for a short distance farther, along the water's edge, they entered a broad and well-built avenue, which led from the principal wharf into the upper parts of the town. Turning up this street, the lad was making his way with great earnestness, when sounds of high merriment and conviviality, breaking from an opposite building, caught his attention, and induced him to pause.

"Remember your mother's injunction," said the officer; "what see you in that tavern to stare at?"

"'Tis the British Coffee-house!" said Job, shaking his head; "yes, anybody might know that by the noise they make in't on Saturday night! see! it's filled now with Lord Boot's officers, flaring afore the windows, just like so many red devils; but to-morrow, when the Old South bell rings, they'll forget their Lord and Maker, every sinner among them!"

"Fellow!" exclaimed the officer, "this is trespassing too far—proceed to Tremont Street, or leave me, that I may, at once, procure another guide."

The changeling cast a look aside at the angry eye of the other, and then turned and proceeded, muttering so loud as to be overheard—

"Everybody that's raised in Boston knows how to keep Saturday night; and if you're a Boston boy, you should love Boston ways."

The officer did not reply, and as they now proceeded with great diligence, they soon passed through King and Queen Streets, and entered that of Tremont. At a little distance from the turning, Job stopped, and pointing to a building near them, he said—

"There; that house with the court-yard afore it, and the pile-axters, and the grand-looking door, that's Ma'am Lechmere's; and everybody says she's a grand lady; but I say it is a pity she isn't a better woman."

"And who are you, that ventures thus boldly to speak of a lady so much your superior?"

"I!" said the idiot, looking up simply into the face of his interrogator, "I am Job Pray, so-called."

"Well, Job Pray, here is a crown for you. The next time you act as guide, keep more

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to your business. I tell you, lad, I offer a crown."

"Job don't love crowns—they say the king wears a crown, and it makes him flaunty and proud like."

"The dissatisfaction must have spread itself wide indeed, if such as he refuse silver, rather than offend their principles!" muttered the officer to himself. "Here then is half a guinea, if you like gold better."

The natural continued kicking a stone about with his toes, without taking his hands from the pockets where he wore them ordinarily, with a sort of idle air, as he peered from under his slouched hat at this renewed offer, answering—

"You wouldn't let the grannies whip Job, and Job won't take your money."

"Well, boy, there is more of gratitude in that than a wiser man would always feel! Come, Meriton, I shall meet the poor fellow again, and will not forget this. I commission you to see the lad better dressed, in the beginning of the week."

"Lord, sir," said the valet, "if it is your pleasure, most certainly; but I declare I don't know in what style I should dress such a figure and countenance, to make anything of them!"

"Sir, sir," cried the lad, running a few steps after the officer, who had already proceeded, "if you won't let the grannies beat Job any more, Job will always show you the way through Boston; and run your a'r'nds too!"

"Poor fellow! well, I promise that you shall not be again abused by any of the soldiery. Good night, my honest friend—let me see you again."

The idiot appeared satisfied with this assurance, for he immediately turned, and gliding along the street with a sort of shuffling gait, he soon disappeared round the first corner. In the meantime the young officer advanced to the entrance which led into the court-yard of Mrs. Lechmere's dwelling. The house was of bricks, and of an exterior altogether more pretending than most of those in the lower parts of the town. It was heavily ornamented, in wood, according to the taste of a somewhat earlier day, and presented a front of seven windows in its two upper stories, those at the extremes being much narrower than the others. The lower floor had the same arrangement, with the exception of the principal door.

Strong lights were shining in many parts of the house, which gave it, in comparison with the gloomy and darkened edifices in its vicinity, an air of peculiar gayety and life. The rap of the gentleman was answered instantly by an old black, dressed in a becoming, and what, for the colonies, was a rich livery. The inquiry for Mrs. Lechmere was successful, and the youth was conducted through a hall of some dimensions, into an apartment which opened from one of its sides. This room would be considered, at the present day, as much too small to contain the fashion of a country town; but what importance it wanted in size was amply compensated for in the richness and labor of its decorations. The walls were divided into compartments, by raised panel-work, beautifully painted with imaginary landscapes and ruins. The glittering, varnished surfaces of these pictures were burdened with armorial bearings, which were intended to illustrate the alliances of the family. Beneath the surbase were smaller divisions of panels, painted with various architectural devices; and above it rose, between the compartments, pilasters of wood with gilded capitals. A heavy wooden, and highly ornamented cornice, stretched above the whole, furnishing an appropriate outline to the walls. The use of carpets was, at that time, but little known in the colonies, though the wealth and station of Mrs. Lechmere would probably have introduced the luxury, had not her age, and the nature of the building, tempted her to adhere to ancient custom. The floor, which shone equally with the furniture, was tessellated with small alternate squares of red cedar and pine, and in the centre were the "saliant Lions" of Lechmere, attempted by the blazonry of the joiner. On either side of the ponderous and labored mantel, were arched compartments, of plainer work, denoting use, the sliding panels of one of which, being raised, displayed a buffet, groaning with massive plate. The furniture was old, rich, and heavy, but in perfect preservation. In the midst of this scene of colonial splendor, which was rendered as impressive as possible by the presence of numerous waxen

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lights, a lady, far in the decline of life, sat, in formal propriety, on a small settee. The officer had thrown his cloak into the hands of Meriton, in the hall, and as he advanced up the apartment, his form appeared in the gay dress of a soldier, giving to its ease and fine proportions the additional charm of military garnish. The hard, severe eye of the lady, sensibly softened with pleased surprise, as it dwelt on his person for an instant after she arose to receive her guest; but the momentary silence was first broken by the youth, who said—

"I have entered unannounced; for my impatience has exceeded by breeding, madam, while each step I have taken in this house recalls the days of my boyhood, and of my former freedom within its walls."

"My cousin Lincoln!" interrupted the lady, who was Mrs. Lechmere; "that dark eye, that smile, nay, your very step, announces you! I must have forgotten my poor brother, and one also who is still so dear to us, not to have known you a true Lincoln!"

There was a distance in the manner of both, at meeting, which might easily have been imparted by the precise formula of the provincial school, of which the lady was so distinguished a member, but which was not sufficient to explain the sad expression that suddenly and powerfully blended with the young man's smile, as she spoke. The change, however, was but momentary, and he answered courteously to her assurances of recognition—

"I have long been taught to expect a second home in Tremont Street, and I find, by your flattering remembrance of myself and parents, dear madam, that my expectations are justified."

The lady was sensibly pleased at this remark, and she suffered a smile to unbend her rigid brow, as she answered—

"A home, certainly, though it be not such an one as the heir of the wealthy house of Lincoln may have been accustomed to dwell in. It would be strange, indeed, could any, allied to that honorable family, forget to entertain its representative with due respect."

The youth seemed conscious that quite as much had now been said as the occasion required, and he raised his head from bowing respectfully on her hand, with the intention of changing the subject to one less personal, when his eye caught a glimpse of the figure of another, and more youthful female, who had been concealed, hitherto, by the drapery of a window-curtain. Advancing to this young lady, he said, with a quickness that rather betrayed his willingness to suspend further compliment—

"And here I see one also, to whom I have the honor of being related; Miss Dynevor?"

"Though it be not my grand-child," said Mrs. Lechmere, "it is one who claims an equal affinity to you, Major Lincoln; it is Agnes Danforth, the daughter of my late niece."

"'Twas my eyes then, and not my feelings, that were mistaken," returned the young soldier; "I hope this lady will admit my claim to call her cousin?"

A simple inclination of the body was the only answer he received, though she did not decline the hand which he offered with his salutations. After a few more of the usual expressions of pleasure, and the ordinary inquiries that succeed such meetings, the party became seated, and a more regular discourse followed.

"I am pleased to find you remember us, then, cousin Lionel," said Mrs. Lechmere; "we have so little in this remote province that will compare with the mother country, I had feared no vestiges of the place of your birth could remain on your mind."

"I find the town greatly altered, it is true, but there are many places in it which I still remember, though certainly their splendor is a little diminished, in my eyes, by absence and a familiarity with other scenes."

"Doubtless, an acquaintance with the British court will have no tendency to exalt our humble customs in your imagination; neither do we possess many buildings to attract the notice of a travelled stranger. There is a tradition in our family, that your seat in Devonshire is as large as any dozen edifices in Boston, public or private; nay, we are proud of saying, that the king himself is lodged as well as the head of the Lincoln family, only when at his castle of Windsor!"

"Ravenscliffe is certainly a place of some magnitude," returned the young man, carelessly, "though you will remember his majesty affects but little state at Kew. I have,

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however, spent so little of my time in the country, that I hardly know its conveniences or its extent."

The old lady bowed with that sort of complacency, which the dwellers in the colonies were apt to betray, whenever an allusion was made to the acknowledged importance of their connections in that country, toward which they all looked as to the fountain of honor; and then, as quickly as if the change in her ideas was but a natural transition in the subject, she observed—

"Surely Cecil cannot know of the arrival of our kinsman! she is not apt to be so remiss in paying attention to our guests!"

"She does me the more honor, that she considers me a relative, and one who requires no formality in his reception."

"You are but cousins twice removed," returned the old lady, a little gravely; "and there is surely no affinity in that degree which can justify any forgetfulness of the usual courtesies. You see, cousin Lionel, how much we value the consanguinity, when it is a subject of pride to the most remote branches of the family!"

"I am but little of a genealogist, madam; though, if I retain a true impression of what I have heard, Miss Dynevor is of too good blood, in the direct line, to value the collateral drops of an intermarriage."

"Pardon me, Major Lincoln; her father, Colonel Dynevor, was certainly an Englishman of an ancient and honorable name, but no family in the realm need scorn an alliance with our own. I say our own, cousin Lionel, for I would never have you forget that I am a Lincoln, and was the sister of your grandfather."

A little surprised at the seeming contradiction in the language of the good lady, the young man bowed his head to the compliment, and cast his eyes at his younger companion with a sort of longing to change the discourse, by addressing the reserved young woman nigh him, that was very excusable in one of his sex and years. He had not time, however, to make more than one or two commonplace remarks, and receive their answers before Mrs. Lechmere said, with some exhibition of staid displeasure against her grandchild—

"Go, Agnes, and acquaint your cousin of this happy event. She has been sensibly alive to your safety, during the whole time consumed by your voyage. We have had the prayers of the Church, for a 'person gone to sea,' read each Sunday, since the receipt of your letters announcing your intention to embark; and I have been exceedingly pleased to observe the deep interest with which Cecil joined in our petitions."

Lionel mumbled a few words of thanks, and leaning back in his chair, threw his eyes upward, but whether in pious gratitude or not, we conceive it is not our province to determine. During the delivery of Mrs. Lechmere's last speech, and the expressive pantomime that succeeded it, Agnes Danforth rose and left the room. The door had been some little time closed before the silence was again broken; during which Mrs. Lechmere evidently essayed in vain, once or twice, to speak. Her color, pale and immovable as usually seemed her withered look, changed in its shades, and her lip trembled involuntarily. She, however, soon found her utterance, though the first tones of her voice were choked and husky.

"I may have appeared remiss, cousin Lionel," she said, "but there are subjects that can be discussed with propriety only between the nearest relatives. Sir Lionel—you left him in as good a state of bodily health, I hope, as his mental illness will allow?"

"It is so represented to me."

"You have seen him lately?"

"Not in fifteen years; my presence was said to increase his disorder, and the physicians forbade any more interviews. He continues at the private establishment near town, and, as the lucid intervals are thought to increase, both in frequency and duration, I often indulge in the pleasing hope of being restored again to my father. The belief is justified by his years, which, you know, are yet under fifty."

A long, and apparently a painful silence, succeeded this interesting communication; at length the lady said, with a tremor in her voice, for which the young man almost reverenced her, as it so plainly bespoke her interest in her nephew, as well as the goodness of her heart—

"I will thank you for a glass of that water in the buffet. Pardon me, cousin Lionel, but

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this melancholy subject always overcomes me. I will retire a few moments, with your indulgence, and hasten the appearance of my grandchild. I pine that you may meet."

Her absence, just at that moment, was too agreeable to the feelings of Lionel, for him to gainsay her intention; though, instead of following Agnes Danforth, who had preceded her on the same duty, the tottering steps of Mrs. Lechmere conducted her to a door, which communicated with her own apartment. For several minutes the young man trampled on the "saliant lions" of Lechmere, with a rapidity that seemed to emulate their own mimic speed, as he paced to and fro across the narrow apartment, his eye glancing vacantly along the labored wainscots, embracing the argent, azure and purpure fields of the different escutcheons, as heedlessly as if they were not charged with the distinguishing symbols of so many honorable names. This mental abstraction was, however, shortly dissipated by the sudden appearance of one, who had glided into the room, and advanced to its centre, before he became conscious of her presence. A light, rounded, and exquisitely proportioned female form, accompanied by a youthful and expressive countenance, with an air in which womanly grace blended so nicely with feminine delicacy as to cause each motion and gesture to command respect, at the same time that it was singularly insinuating, was an object to suspend, even at a first glance, provided that glance were by surprise, the steps of a more absent and less courteous youth than the one we have attempted to describe. Major Lincoln knew that this young lady could be no other than Cecil Dynevor, the daughter of a British officer, long since deceased, by the only child of Mrs. Lechmere, who was also in her grave; and, consequently, that she was one to whom he was so well known by character, and so nearly allied by blood, as to render it an easy task for a man accustomed to the world, as he had been, to remove any little embarrassments, which might have beset a less practised youth, by acting as his own usher. This he certainly attempted, and at first with a freedom which his affinity, and the circumstances, would seem to allow, though it was chastened by easy politeness. But the restraint visible in the manner of the lady was so marked, that, by the time his salutations were ended, and he had handed her to a seat, the young man felt as much embarrassment as if he had found himself alone, for the first time, with the woman whom he had been pining, for months, to favor with a very particular communication. Whether it is that nature has provided the other sex with a tact for these occasions, or that the young lady became sensible that her deportment was not altogether such as was worthy either of herself, or the guest of her grandmother, she was certainly the first to relieve the slight awkwardness that was but too apparent in the commencement of the interview.

"My grandmother has long been expecting this pleasure, Major Lincoln," she said, "and your arrival has been at a most auspicious moment. The state of the country grows each day so very alarming, that I have indeed long urged her to visit our relatives in England, until the disputes shall have terminated."

The tones of an extremely soft and melodious voice, and a pronunciation quite as exact as if the speaker had acquired the sounds in the English court and which was entirely free from the slight vernacular peculiarity, which had offended his ear, in the few words that fell from Agnes Danforth, certainly aided a native attraction of manner, which it seemed impossible for the young lady to cast entirely aside.

"You, who are so much of an English woman, would find great pleasure in the exchange," he answered, "and if half what I have heard from a fellow-passenger, of the state of the country, be true, I shall be foremost in seconding your request. Both Ravenscliffe and the house in Soho would be greatly at the service of Mrs. Lechmere."

"It was my wish that she would accept the pressing invitations of my father's relative, Lord Cardonnel, who has long urged me to pass a few years in his own family. A separation would be painful to us both, but should my grandmother, in such an event, determine to take her residence in the dwellings of her ancestors, I could not be censured for adopting a resolution to abide under the roofs of mine."

The piercing eye of Major Lincoln fell full upon her own, as she delivered this intention,

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and as it dropped on the floor, the slight smile that played round his lip, was produced by the passing thought, that the provincial beauty had inherited so much of her grandmother's pride of genealogy, as to be willing to impress on his mind, that the niece of a viscount was superior to the heir of a baronetcy. But the quick, burning flush, that instantly passed across the features of Cecil Dynevor, might have taught him, that she was acting under the impulse of much deeper feelings than such an unworthy purpose would indicate. The effect, however, was such as to make the young man glad to see Mrs. Lechmere re-enter the room, leaning on the arm of her niece.

"I perceive, my cousin Lionel," said the lady, as she moved with a feeble step toward the settee, "that you and Cecil have found each other out, without the necessity of any other introduction than the affinity between you. I surely do not mean the affinity of blood altogether, you know, for that cannot be said to amount to anything; but I believe there exist certain features of the mind that are transmitted through families quite as distinctly as any which belong to the countenance."

"Could I flatter myself with possessing the slightest resemblance to Miss Dynevor, in either of those particulars, I should be doubly proud of the connection," returned Lionel, while he assisted the good lady to a seat, with a coolness that sufficiently denoted how little he cared about the matter.

"But I am not disposed to have my right to claim near kindred with cousin Lionel at all disputed," cried the young lady, with sudden animation. "It has pleased our forefathers to order such——"

"Nay, nay, my child," interrupted her grandmother, "you forget that the term of cousin can only be used in cases of near consanguinity, and where familiar situations will excuse it. But Major Lincoln knows, that we in the colonies are apt to make the most of the language, and count our cousins almost as far as if we were members of the Scottish clans. Speaking of the clans reminds me of the rebellion of '45. It is not thought in England, that our infatuated colonists will ever be so foolhardy as to assume their arms in earnest."

"There are various opinions on that subject," said Lionel. "Most military men scout the idea; though I find, occasionally, an officer, that has served on this continent, who thinks not only that the appeal will be made, but that the struggle will be bloody."

"Why should they not!" said Agnes Danforth, abruptly; "they are men, and the English are no more!"

Lionel turned his looks, in a little surprise, on the speaker, to whose countenance an almost imperceptible cast in one eye imparted a look of arch good-nature, that her manner would seem to contradict, and smiled as he repeated her words—

"Why should they not, indeed! I know no other reasons than that it would be both a mad and an unlawful act. I can assure you that I am not one of those who affect to undervalue my own countrymen; for you will remember that I too am an American."

"I have heard it said that such of our volunteers as wear uniforms at all," said Agnes, "appear in blue, and not in scarlet."

"'Tis his Majesty's pleasure that his 47th foot should wear this gaudy color," returned the young man, laughing; "though, for myself, I am quite willing to resign it to the use of you ladies, and to adopt another, could it well be."

"It might be done, sir."

"In what manner?"

"By resigning your commission with it."

Mrs. Lechmere had evidently permitted her niece to proceed thus far, without interruption, to serve some purpose of her own; but perceiving that her guest by no means exhibited the air of pique, which the British officers were so often weak enough to betray, when the women took into their hands the defence of their country's honor, she rang the bell, as she observed—

"Bold language, Major Lincoln! bold language for a young lady under twenty. But Miss Danforth is privileged to speak her mind freely, for some of her father's family are but too deeply implicated in the unlawful proceedings of these evil times. We have kept Cecil, however, more to her allegiance."

"And yet even Cecil has been known to refuse the favor of her countenance to the entertainments given by the British officers!" said Agnes, a little piquantly.

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"And would you have Cecil Dynevor frequent balls and entertainments unaccompanied by a proper chaperon," returned Mrs. Lechmere; "or is it expected that, at seventy, I can venture in public to maintain the credit of our family? But we keep Major Lincoln from his refreshments with our idle disputes. Cato, we wait your movements."

Mrs. Lechmere delivered her concluding intimation to the black in attendance, with an air that partook somewhat of mystery. The old domestic, who, probably from long practice, understood, more by the expression of her eye than by any words she had uttered, the wishes of his mistress, proceeded to close the outer shutters of the windows, and to draw the curtains with the most exact care. When this duty was performed, he raised a small oval table from its regular position among the flowing folds of the drapery that shrouded the deep apertures for light, and placed it in front of Miss Dynevor. A salver of massive silver, containing an equipage of the finest Dresden, followed, and in a few minutes a hissing urn of the same precious metal garnished the polished surface of the mahogany. During these arrangements, Mrs. Lechmere and her guest maintained a general discourse, touching chiefly on the welfare and condition of certain individuals of their alliance, in England. Notwithstanding the demand thus made on his attention, Lionel was able to discover a certain appearance of mystery and caution in each movement of the black, as he proceeded leisurely in his duty. Miss Dynevor permitted the disposition of the tea-table to be made before her, passively, and her cousin, Agnes Danforth, threw herself back on one of the settees, with a look that indicated cool displeasure. When the usual compound was made in two little fluted cups, over whose pure white a few red and green sprigs were sparingly scattered, the black presented one containing the grateful beverage to his mistress, and the other to the stranger.

"Pardon me, Miss Danforth," said Lionel, recollecting himself after he had accepted the offering; "I have suffered my sea-breeding to obtain the advantage."

"Enjoy your error, sir, if you can find any gratification in the indulgence," returned the young lady.

"But I should enjoy it the more, could I see you participating in the luxury."

"You have termed the idle indulgence well; 'tis nothing but a luxury, and such a one as can be easily dispensed with; I thank you, sir, I do not drink tea."

"Surely no lady can forswear her bohea! be persuaded."

"I know not how the subtle poison may operate on your English ladies, Major Lincoln, but it is no difficult matter for an American girl to decline the use of a detestable herb, which is one, among many others, of the causes that are likely to involve her country and kindred in danger and strife."

The young man, who had really intended no more than the common civilities due from his sex to the other, bowed in silence, though, as he turned from her, he could not forbear looking toward the table to see whether the principles of the other young American were quite as rigid. Cecil sat bending over the salver, playing idly with a curiously wrought spoon, made to represent a sprig of the plant whose fragrance had been thus put in requisition to contribute to his indulgence, while the steam from the china vessel before her was wreathing in a faint mist around her polished brow.

"You at least, Miss Dynevor," said Lionel, "appear to have no dislike to the herb, you breathe its vapor so freely."

Cecil cast a glance at him, which changed the demure and somewhat proud composure of her countenance into a look of sudden, joyous humor, that was infinitely more natural, as she answered laughingly—

"I own a woman's weakness—I must believe it was tea that tempted our common mother in Paradise!"

"It would show that the cunning of the serpent has been transmitted to a later day, could that be proved," said Agnes, "though the instrument of temptation has lost some of its virtue."

"How know you that?" said Lionel, anxious to pursue the trifling, in order to remove the evident distance which had existed between them; "had Eve shut her ears as rigidly as you close your mouth against the offering, we might yet have enjoyed the first gift to our parents."

"Oh, sir, 'tis no such stranger to me as

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you may imagine from the indifference I have assumed on the present occasion; as Job Pray says, Boston harbor is nothing but a 'big teapot!'"

"You know Job Pray, then, Miss Danforth!" said Lionel, not a little amused by her spirit.

"Certainly; Boston is so small, and Job so useful, that everybody knows the simpleton."

"He belongs to a distinguished family, then, for I have his own assurance that everybody knows his perturbed mother, Abigail."

"You!" exclaimed Cecil, again in that sweet, natural voice that had before startled her auditor; "what can you know of poor Job, and his almost equally unfortunate mother?"

"Now, young ladies, I have you in my snares!" cried Lionel; "you may possibly resist the steams of tea, but what woman can withstand the impulse of her curiosity? Not to be too cruel with my fair kinswomen on so short an acquaintance, however, I will go so far as to acknowledge that I have already had an interview with Mrs. Pray."

The reply which Agnes was about to deliver was interrupted by a slight crash, and on turning they beheld the fragments of a piece of the splendid set of Dresden, lying at the feet of Mrs. Lechmere.

"My dear grandmamma is ill!" cried Cecil, springing to the assistance of the old lady. "Hasten, Cato—Major Lincoln, you are more active—for heaven's sake a glass of water—Agnes, your salts."

The amiable anxiety of her grandchild was not, however, so necessary as first appearances would have indicated, and Mrs. Lechmere gently put aside the salts, though she did not decline the glass which Lionel offered for the second time in so short a period.

"I fear you will mistake me for a sad invalid, cousin Lionel," said the old lady, when she had become a little composed; "but I believe it is this very tea, of which so much has been said, and which I drink to excess, from pure loyalty, that unsettles my nerves—I must refrain, like the girls, though from a very different motive. We are a people of early hours, Major Lincoln, but you are at home here, and will pursue your pleasure; I must, however, claim an indulgence for threescore-and-ten, and be permitted to wish you a good rest after your voyage. Cato has his orders to contribute all he can to your comfort."

Leaning on her two assistants, the old lady withdrew, leaving Lionel to the full possession of the apartment. As the hour was getting late, and from the compliments they had exchanged, he did not expect the return of the younger ladies, he called for a candle, and was shown to his own room. As soon as the few indispensables, which rendered a valet necessary to a gentleman of that period, were observed, he dismissed Meriton, and throwing himself in the bed, courted the sweets of the pillow.

Many incidents, however, had occurred during the day, that induced a train of thoughts, which for a long time prevented his attaining the natural rest he sought. After indulging in long and uneasy reflections on certain events, too closely connected with his personal feelings to be lightly remembered, the young man began to muse on his reception, and on the individuals who had been, as it were, for the first time, introduced to him.

It was quite apparent, that both Mrs. Lechmere and her granddaughter were acting their several parts, though whether in concert or not, remained to be discovered. But in Agnes Danforth, with all his subtlety, he could perceive nothing but the plain and direct, though a little blunt, peculiarities of her nature and education. Like most very young men, who had just been made acquainted with two youthful females, both of them much superior to the generality of their sex in personal charms, he fell asleep musing on their characters. Nor, considering the circumstances, will it be at all surprising, when we add that, before morning, he was dreaming of the Avon, of Bristol, on board which stout vessel he even thought that he was discussing a chowder on the Banks of Newfoundland, which had been unaccountably prepared by the fair hands of Miss Danforth, and which was strangely flavored with tea; while the Hebe-looking countenance of Cecil Dynevor was laughing at his perplexities with undisguised good-humor, and with all the vivacity of girlish merriment.

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CHAPTER IV.

"A good portly man, i' faith, and a corpulent."
—*King Henry IV.*

THE sun was just stirring the heavy bank of fog, which had rested on the waters during the night, as Lionel toiled his way up the side of Beacon-Hill, anxious to catch a glimpse of his native scenery while it was yet glowing with the first touch of day. The islands raised their green heads above the mist, and the wide amphitheatre of hills that encircled the bay was still visible, though the vapor was creeping in places along the valleys —now concealing the entrance to some beautiful glen, and now wreathing itself fantastically around a tall spire that told the site of a suburban village. Though the people of the town were awake and up, yet the sacred character of the day, and the state of the times, contributed to suppress those sounds which usually distinguish populous places. The cool nights and warm days of April had generated a fog more than usually dense, which was deserting its watery bed, and stealing insidiously along the land, to unite with the vapors of the rivers and brooks, spreading a wider curtain before the placid view. As Lionel stood on the brow of the platform that crowned the eminence, the glimpses of houses and hills, of towers and ships, of places known and places forgotten, passed before his vision, through the openings in the mist, like phantoms of the imagination. The whole scene, animated and in motion, as it seemed by its changes, appeared to his excited feelings like a fanciful panorama, exhibited for his eye alone, when his enjoyment was interrupted by a voice apparently at no great distance. It was a man singing to a common English air fragments of some ballad, with a peculiarly vile nasal cadency. Through the frequent pauses, he was enabled to comprehend a few words, which, by their recurrence, were evidently intended for a chorus to the rest of the production. The reader will understand the character of the whole from these lines, which ran as follows:

And they that would be free,
Out they go;
While the slaves, as you may see,
Stay, to drink their p'ison tea,
Down below!

Lionel, after listening to this expressive ditty for a moment, followed the direction of the sounds until he encountered Job Pray, who was seated on one of the flights of steps which aided the ascent to the platform, cracking a few walnuts on the boards, while he employed those intervals, when his mouth could find no better employment, in uttering the above-mentioned strains.

"How now, Master Pray; do you come here to sing your orisons to the goddess of liberty on a Sunday morning," cried Lionel; "or are you the town lark, and for want of wings, take to this height to obtain an altitude for your melody?"

"There's no harm in singing psalm tunes or continental songs any day in the week," said the lad, without raising his eyes from his occupation. "Job don't know what a lark is, but if it belongs to the town, the soldiers are so thick, they can't keep it on the common."

"And what objection can you have to the soldiers possessing a corner of your common?"

"They starve the cows, and then they won't give milk; grass is sweet to beasts in the spring of the year."

"But, my life for it, the soldiers don't eat the grass; your brindles and your blacks, your reds and your whites, may have the first offering of the spring as usual."

"But Boston cows don't love grass that British soldiers have trampled on," said the sullen lad.

"This is, indeed, carrying notions of liberty to refinement!" exclaimed Lionel, laughing.

Job shook his head threateningly, as he looked up and said, "Don't you let Ralph hear you say anything ag'in liberty!"

"Ralph! who is he, lad? your genius! where do you keep the invisible, that there is danger of his overhearing what I say?"

"He's up there in the fog," said Job, pointing significantly toward the foot of the beacon, which a dense volume of vapor was enwrapping, probably attracted by the tall post that supported the grate.

Lionel gazed at the smoky column for a moment, when the mists began to dissolve, and amid their evolutions he beheld the dim figure of his aged fellow-passenger. The old

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man was still clad in his simple, tarnished vestments of gray, which harmonized so singularly with the mists as to impart a look almost ethereal to his wasted form. As the medium through which he was seen became less cloudy, his features grew visible, and Lionel could distinguish the uneasy, rapid glances of his eyes, which seemed to roam over the distant objects with an earnestness that appeared to mock the misty veil that was floating before so much of the view. While Lionel stood fixed to the spot, gazing at this irregular being with that secret awe which the other had succeeded in inspiring, the old man waved his hand impatiently, as if he would cast aside his shroud. At that instant a bright sunbeam darted into the vapor, illuminating his person, and melting the mist into thin air. The anxious, haggard, and severe expression of his countenance changed at the touch of the ray, and he smiled with a softness and attraction that thrilled the nerves of the other, as he called aloud to the sensitive young soldier—

"Come hither, Lionel Lincoln, to the foot of this beacon, where you may gather warnings, which, if properly heeded, will guide you through many and great dangers unharmed."

"I am glad you have spoken," said Lionel, advancing to his side; "you appeared like a being of another world, wrapped in that mantle of fog, and I felt tempted to kneel, and ask a benediction."

"And am I not a being of another world? most of my interests are already in the grave, and I tarry here only for a space, because there is a great work to be done, which cannot be performed without me. My view of the world of spirits, young man, is much clearer and more distinct than yours of this variable scene at your feet. There is no mist to obstruct the eye, nor any doubts as to the colors it presents."

"You are happy, sir, in the extremity of your age, to be so assured. But I fear your sudden determination last night subjected you to inconvenience in the tenement of this changeling."

"The boy is a good boy," said the old man, stroking the head of the natural complacently; "we understand each other, Major Lincoln, and that shortens introductions, and renders communion easy."

"That you feel alike on one subject, I have already discovered; but there I should think the resemblance and the intelligence must end."

"The propensities of the mind in its infancy and in its maturity, are but a span apart," said the stranger; "the amount of human knowledge is but to know how much we are under the dominion of our passions; and he who has learned by experience how to smother the volcano, and he who never felt its fires, are surely fit associates."

Lionel bowed in silence to an opinion so humbling to the other, and, after a pause of a moment, adverted to their situation.

"The sun begins to make himself felt, and when he has driven away these ragged remnants of the fog, we shall see those places each of us has frequented in his day."

"Shall we find them as we left them, think you? or will you see the stranger in possession of the haunts of your infancy?"

"Not the stranger, certainly, for we are the subjects of one king; children who own a common parent."

"I will not reply that he has proved himself an unnatural father," said the old man, calmly; "the gentleman who now fills the British throne is less to be censured than his advisers, for the oppression of his reign——"

"Sir," interrupted Lionel, "if such allusions are made to the person of my sovereign, we must separate; for it ill becomes a British officer to hear his master mentioned with levity."

"Levity!" repeated the other slowly. "It is a fault indeed to accompany gray locks and wasted limbs! but your jealous watchfulness betrays you into error. I have breathed in the atmosphere of kings, young man, and know how to separate the individual and his purpose from the policy of his government. 'Tis the latter that will sever this great empire, and deprive the third George of what has so often and so well been termed 'the brightest jewel in his crown.'"

"I must leave you, sir," said Lionel; "the opinions you so freely expressed during our passage, were on principles which I can hardly call opposed to our own constitution, and might be heard, not only without offence, but frequently with admiration; but this language approaches to treason!"

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"Go, then," returned the unmoved stranger; "descend to yon degraded common, and bid your mercenaries seize me—'twill be only the blood of an old man, but 'twill help to fatten the land; or send your merciless grenadiers to torment their victim before the axe shall do its work; a man who has lived so long, can surely spare a little of his time to the tormentors!"

"I could have thought, sir, that you might spare such a reproach to me," said Lionel.

"I do spare it, and I do more; I forget my years, and solicit forgiveness. But had you known slavery, as I have done, in its worst of forms, you would know how to prize the inestimable blessing of freedom."

"Have you ever known slavery, in your travels, more closely than in what you deem the violations of principle?"

"Have I not?" said the stranger, smiling bitterly; "I have known it as man should never know it; in act and will. I have lived days, months, and even years, to hear others coldly declare my wants; to see others dole out their meagre pittances to my necessities, and to hear others assume the right to express the sufferings, and to control the enjoyments, of sensibilities that God had given to me only!"

"To endure such thraldom, you must have fallen into the power of the infidel barbarians!"

"Ay! boy, I thank you for the words; they were indeed most worthy of the epithets! infidels that denied the precepts of our blessed Redeemer; and barbarians that treated one having a soul, and possessing reason like themselves, as a beast of the field."

"Why didn't you come to Boston, Ralph, and tell that to the people in Funnel-Hall?" exclaimed Job; "ther'd ha' been a stir about it!"

"Child, I did come to Boston, again and again, in thought; and the appeals that I made to my townsmen would have moved the very roof of old Faneuil, could they have been uttered within her walls. But 'twas in vain! they had the power, and like demons—or rather like miserable men—they abused it."

Lionel, sensibly touched, was about to reply in a suitable manner, when he heard a voice calling his own name aloud, as if the speaker were ascending the opposite acclivity of the hill. The instant the sounds reached his ears, the old man rose from his seat, on the foundation of the beacon, and gliding over the brow of the platform, followed by Job, they descended into a volume of mist that was still clinging to the side of the hill, with amazing swiftness.

"Why, Leo! thou lion in name, and deer in activity!" exclaimed the intruder, as he surmounted the steep ascent, "what can have brought you up into the clouds so early! whew—a man needs a New-Market training to scale such a precipice. But, Leo, my dear fellow, I rejoice to see you—we knew you were expected in the first ship, and as I was coming from morning parade, I met a couple of grooms in the 'Lincoln green,' you know, leading each a blooded charger—faith, one of them would have been quite convenient to climb this accursed hill on—whew and whew-w, again—well, I knew the liveries at a glance; as to the horses, I hope to be better acquainted with them hereafter. 'Pray, sir,' said I, to one of the liveried scoundrels, 'whom do you serve?' 'Major Lincoln, of Ravenscliffe, sir,' said he, with a look as impudent as if he could have said, like you and I, 'His sacred majesty, the king.' That's the answer of the servants of your ten thousand a year men! Now, if my fool had been asked such a question, his answer would have been, craven dog as he is, 'Captain Polwarth, of the 47th;' leaving the inquirer, though it should even be some curious maiden who had taken a fancy to the *tout ensemble* of my outline, in utter ignorance that there is such a place in the world as Polwarth-Hall!"

During this voluble speech, which was interrupted by sundry efforts to regain the breath lost in the ascent, Lionel shook his friend cordially by the hand, and attempted to express his own pleasure at the meeting. The failure of wind, however, which was a sort of besetting sin with Captain Polwarth, had now compelled him to pause, and gave time to Lionel to reply.

"This hill is the last place where I should have expected to meet you," he said. "I took it for granted you would not be stirring until nine or ten at least, when it was my intention to inquire you out, and to give you a

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call before I paid my respects to the commander-in-chief."

"Ah! you may thank his excellency, the 'Hon. Thomas Gage, governor and commander-in-chief in and over the Province of Massachusetts Bay, and vice-admiral of the same,' as he styles himself in his proclamations, for this especial favor; though, between ourselves, Leo, he is about as much governor *over* the Province as he is owner of those hunters you have just landed."

"But why am I to thank him for this interview?"

"Why! look about you, and tell me what you behold—nothing but fog—nay, I see *there* is a steeple, and *yonder* is the smoking sea, and *here* are the chimneys of Hancock's house beneath us, smoking too, as if their rebellious master were at home, and preparing his feed! but everything in sight is essentially smoky, and there is a natural aversion, in us epicures, to smoke. Nature dictates that a man who has as much to do in a day, in carrying himself about, as your humble servant, should not cut his rest too abruptly in the morning. But the honorable Thomas, governor and vice-admiral, etc., has ordered us under arms with the sun, officers as well as men!"

"Surely that is no great hardship to a soldier," returned Lionel; "and moreover, it seems to agree with you marvellously! Now I look again, Polwarth, I am amazed! Surely you are not in a light-infantry jacket!"

"Certes—what is there in that so wonderful?" returned the other, with great gravity. "Don't I become the dress, or is it the dress which does not adorn me, that you look ready to die with mirth? Laugh it out, Leo. I am used to it these three days—but what is there, after all, so remarkable in Peter Polworth's commanding a company of light infantry? Am I not just five feet, six and one-eighth of an inch?—the precise height!"

"You appear to have been so accurate in your longitudinal admeasurement, that you must carry one of Harrison's timepieces in your pocket; did it ever suggest itself to you to use the quadrant also?"

"For my latitude! I understand you, Leo; because I am shaped a little like mother earth, does it argue that I cannot command a light-infantry company?"

"Ay, even as Joshua commanded the sun. But the stopping of the planet itself, is not a greater miracle in my eyes, than to see you in that attire."

"Well, then, the mystery shall be explained; but first let us be seated on this beacon," said Captain Polwarth, establishing himself with great method in the place so lately occupied by the attenuated form of the stranger; "a true soldier husbands his resources for a time of need; that word, husbands, brings me at once to the point—I am in love."

"That is surprising!"

"But what is much more so, I would fain be married."

"It must be a woman of no mean endowments that could excite such desires in Captain Polwarth, of the 47th, and of Polwarth-Hall!"

"She is a woman of great qualifications, Major Lincoln," said the lover, with a sudden gravity that indicated his gayety of manner was not entirely natural. "In figure she may be said to be done to a turn. When she is grave, she walks with the stateliness of a show beef; when she runs, 'tis with the activity of a turkey; and when at rest, I can only compare her to a dish of venison, savory, delicate, and what one can never get enough of."

"You have, to adopt your own metaphors, given such a 'rare' sketch of her person, I am 'burning' to hear something of her mental qualifications."

"My metaphors are not poetical, perhaps, but they are the first that offer themselves to my mind, and they are natural. Her accomplishments exceed her native gifts greatly. In the first place, she is witty; in the second, she is as impertinent as the devil; and in the third, as inveterate a little traitor to King George as there is in all Boston."

"These are strange recommendations to your favor!"

"The most infallible of all recommendations. They are piquant, like savory sauces, which excite the appetite, and season the dish. Now her treason (for it amounts to that in fact) is like olives, and gives a gusto to the generous port of my loyalty. Her

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impertinence is oil to the cold salad of my modesty, and her acid wit mingles with the sweetness of my temperament, in that sort of pleasant combination, with which sweet and sour blend in sherbet."

"It would be idle for me to gainsay the charms of such a woman," returned Lionel, a good deal amused with the droll mixture of seriousness and humor in the other's manner; "now for her connection with the light-infantry—she is not of the light corps of her own sex, Polwarth?"

"Pardon me, Major Lincoln; I cannot joke on this subject. Miss Danforth is of one of the best families in Boston."

"Danforth! not Agnes, surely!"

"The very same!" exclaimed Polwarth, in surprise; "what do you know of her?"

"Only that she is a sort of cousin of my own, and that we are inmates of the same house. We bear equal affinity to Mrs. Lechmere, and the good lady has insisted that I shall make my home in Tremont Street."

"I rejoice to hear it! At all events, our intimacy may now be improved to some better purpose than eating and drinking. But to the point—there were certain damnable innuendoes getting into circulation, concerning my proportions, which I considered it prudent to look down at once."

"In order to do which, you had only to look thinner."

"And do I not, in this appropriate dress? To be perfectly serious with you, Leo,—for to you I can freely unburden myself,—you know what a set we are in the 47th: let them once fasten an opprobrious term, or a nickname, on you, and you take it to the grave, be it ever so burdensome."

"There is a way, certainly, to check ungentleman-like liberties," said Lionel, gravely.

"Poh! poh! a man wouldn't wish to fight about a pound more or a pound less of fat! still the name is a great deal, and first impressions are everything. Now, whoever thinks of Grand Cairo, as a village; of the Grand Turk and Great Mogul, as little boys; or, who would believe, by hearsay, that Captain Polwarth, of the light infantry, could weigh one hundred and eighty!"

"Add twenty to it."

"Not a pound more, as I am a sinner. I was weighed in the presence of the whole mess no later than last week, since when I have rather lost than gained an ounce, for this early rising is no friend to a thriving condition. 'Twas in my nightgown, you'll remember, Leo, for we, who tally so often, can't afford to throw in boots, and buckles, and all those sorts of things, like your feather-weights."

"But I marvel how Nesbitt was induced to consent to the appointment," said Lionel; "he loves a little display."

"I am your man for that," interrupted the captain; "we are embodied you know, and I make more display, if that be what you require, than any captain in the corps. But I will whisper a secret in your ear. There has been a nasty business here, lately, in which the 47th has gained no new laurels—a matter of tarring and feathering, about an old rusty musket."

"I have heard something of the affair already," returned Lionel, "and was grieved to find the men justifying some of their own brutal conduct last night, by the example of their commander."

"Mum—'tis a delicate matter—well, that tar has brought the colonel into particularly bad odor in Boston, especially among the women, in whose good graces we are all of us lower than I have ever known scarlet coats to stand before. Why, Leo, the Mohairs are altogether the better men, here! But there is not an officer in the whole army who has made more friends in the place than your humble servant. I have availed myself of my popularity, which just now is no trifling thing, and partly by promises, and partly by secret interest, I have the company; to which, you know, my rank in the regiment gives me an undoubted title."

"A perfectly satisfactory explanation; a most commendable ambition on your part, and a certain symptom that the peace is not to be disturbed; for Gage would never permit such an arrangement, had he any active operations in his eye."

"Why, there I think you are more than half right; these Yankees have been talking, and resolving, and approbating their resolves, as they call it, these ten years past; and what does it all amount to? To be sure, things grow worse and worse every day—but Jona-

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than is an enigma to me. Now you know, when we were in the cavalry together—God forgive me the suicide I committed in exchanging into the foot, which I never should have done, could I have found in all England such a thing as an easy goer, or a safe leaper—but then, if the commons took offence at a new tax, or a stagnation in business, why, they got together in mobs, and burnt a house or two, frightened a magistrate, and perhaps hustled a constable; then in we came at a hand gallop, you know, flourished our swords, and scattered the ragged devils to the four winds; when the courts did the rest, leaving us a cheap victory at the expense of a little wind, which was amply compensated by an increased appetite for dinner. But here it is altogether a different sort of thing."

"And what are most alarming symptoms, just now, in the colonies?" asked Major Lincoln, with a sensible interest in the subject.

"They refuse their natural aliment to uphold what they call their principles; the women abjure tea, and the men abandon their fisheries! There has been hardly such a thing as even a wild-duck brought into the market this spring, in consequence of the Port-Bill, and yet they grow more stubborn every day. If it should come to blows, however, thank God we are strong enough to open a passage for ourselves to any part of the continent where provisions may be plentier; and I hear more troops are already on the way."

"If it should come to blows, which heaven forbid," said Major Lincoln, "we shall be besieged where we now are."

"Besieged!" exclaimed Polwarth, in evident alarm; "if I thought there was the least prospect of such a calamity, I would sell out to-morrow. It is bad enough now; our mess-table is never decently covered, but if there should come a siege, 'twould be absolute starvation.—No, no, Leo, their minute men, and their long-tailed rabble, would hardly think of besieging four thousand British soldiers with a fleet to back them. Four thousand! if the regiments I hear named are actually on the way, there will be eight thousand of us—as good men as ever wore——"

"Light-infantry jackets," interrupted Lionel. "But the regiments are certainly coming; Clinton, Burgoyne, and Howe, had an audience to take leave on the same day with myself. The service is exceedingly popular with the king, and our reception, of course, was most gracious; though I thought the eye of royalty looked on me as if it remembered one or two of my juvenile votes in the house, on the subject of these unhappy dissensions."

"You voted against the Port-Bill," said Polwarth, "out of regard to me?"

"No; there I joined the ministry. The conduct of the people of Boston had provoked the measure, and there were hardly two minds in Parliament on that question."

"Ah! Major Lincoln, you are a happy man," said the captain; "a seat in Parliament at five-and-twenty! I must think that I should prefer just such an occupation to all others—the very name is taking; a seat! you have two members for your borough—who fills the second now?"

"Say nothing on that subject, I entreat you," whispered Lionel, pressing the arm of the other, as he rose; "'tis not filled by him who should occupy it, as you know.—Shall we descend to the common? there are many friends that I could wish to see before the bell calls us to church."

"Yes; this is a church-going, or, rather, meeting-going place; for most of the good people forswear the use of the word church, as we abjure the supremacy of the pope," returned Polwarth, following in his companion's footsteps; "I never think of attending any of their schism-shops, for I would any day rather stand sentinel over a baggage-wagon than stand up to hear one of their prayers. I can do very well at the King's Chapel, as they call it; for when I am once comfortably fixed on my knees, I make out as well as my lord archbishop of Canterbury; though it has always been matter of surprise to me, how any man can find breath to go through their work of a morning."

They descended the hill, as Lionel replied, and their forms were soon blended with those of twenty others, who wore scarlet coats, on the common.

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CHAPTER V.

"For us, and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently."—*Hamlet.*

We must, now, carry the reader back a century, in order to clear our tale of every appearance of ambiguity. Reginald Lincoln was a cadet of an extremely ancient and wealthy family, whose possessions were suffered to continue as appendages to a baronetcy, throughout all the changes which marked the eventful period of the commonwealth, and the usurpation of Cromwell. He had himself, however, inherited little more than a morbid sensibility, which, even in that age, appeared to be a sort of heirloom to his family. While still a young man, he had married a woman to whom he was much attached, who died in giving birth to her first child. The grief of the husband took a direction toward religion; but unhappily, instead of deriving from his researches that healing consolation with which our faith abounds, his mind became soured by the prevalent, but discordant views of the attributes of the Deity; and the result of his conversion was, to leave him an ascetic puritan, and an obstinate predestinarian. That such a man, finding but little to connect him with his native country, should revolt at the impure practices of the court of Charles, is not surprising; and, accordingly, though not at all implicated in the guilt of the regicides, he departed for the religious province of Massachusetts-Bay, in the first years of the reign of that merry prince.

It was not difficult for a man of the rank and reputed sanctity of Reginald Lincoln, to obtain both honorable and lucrative employments in the plantations; and, after the first glow of his awakened ardor in behalf of spiritual matters had a little abated, he failed not to improve a due portion of his time by a commendable attention to temporal things. To the day of his death, however, he continued a gloomy, austere, and bigoted religionist, seemingly too regardless of the vanities of this world to permit his pure imagination to mingle with its dross, even while he submitted to discharge its visible duties. Notwithstanding this elevation of mind, his son, at the decease of his father, found himself in the possession of many goodly effects; which were, questionless, the accumulations of a neglected use during the days of his sublimated progenitor.

Young Lionel so far followed in the steps of his worthy parent, as to continue gathering honors and riches into his lap; though, owing to an early disappointment, and the inheritance of the "heirloom" already mentioned, it was late in life before he found a partner to share his happiness. Contrary to all the usual calculations that are made on the choice of a man of self-denial, he was then united to a youthful and gay Episcopalian, who had little, beside her exquisite beauty and good blood, to recommend her. By this lady he had four children, three sons and a daughter, when he also was laid in the vault, by the side of his deceased parent. The eldest of these sons was yet a boy when he was called to the mother-country, to inherit the estates and honors of his family. The second, named Reginald, who was bred to arms, married, had a son, and lost his life in the wilds where he was required to serve, before he was five-and-twenty. The third was the grandfather of Agnes Danforth; and the daughter was Mrs. Lechmere.

The family of Lincoln, considering the shortness of their marriages, had been extremely prolific while in the colonies, according to that wise allotment of Providence, which ever seems to regulate the functions of our nature by our wants; but the instant it was reconveyed to the populous island of Britain, it entirely lost its reputation for fruitfulness. Sir Lionel lived to a good age, married, but died childless; notwithstanding, when his body lay in state, it was under a splendid roof and in halls so capacious that they would have afforded comfortable shelter to the whole family of Priam.

By this fatality, it became necessary to cross the Atlantic once more, to find an heir to the wide domains of Ravenscliffe, and to one of the oldest baronetcies in the kingdom.

We have planted and reared this genealogical tree to but little purpose, if it be necessary to tell the reader that the individual, who had now become the head of his race, was the orphan son of the deceased officer. He was married, and the father of one blooming boy, when this elevation, which was not unlooked for, occurred. Leaving his wife and

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child behind him, Sir Lionel immediately proceeded to England, to assert his rights and secure his possessions. As he was the nephew and acknowledged heir of the late incumbent, he met with no opposition to the more important parts of his claims. Across the character and fortunes of this gentleman, however, a dark cloud had early passed, which prevented the common eye from reading the events of his life, like those of other men, in its open and intelligible movements. After his accession to fortune and rank, but little was known of him, even by his earliest and most intimate associates. It was rumored, it is true, that he had been detained in England, for two years, by a vexatious contention for a petty appendage to his large estates, a controversy which was, however, known to have been decided in his favor, before he was recalled to Boston by the sudden death of his wife. This calamity befell him during the period when the war of '56 was raging in its greatest violence: a time when the energies of the colonies were directed to the assistance of the mother-country, who, according to the language of the day, was zealously endeavoring to defeat the ambitious views of the French in this hemisphere; or, what amounted to the same thing in effect, was struggling to advance her own.

It was an interesting period, when the mild and peaceful colonists were seen to shake off their habits of forbearance, and to enter into the strife with an alacrity and spirit that soon emulated the utmost daring of their more practised confederates. To the amazement of all who knew his fortunes, Sir Lionel Lincoln was seen to embark in many of the most desperate adventures that distinguished the war, with a hardihood that rather sought death than courted honor. He had been, like his father, trained to arms, but the regiment in which he held the commission of lieutenant-colonel was serving his master in the most eastern of his dominions, while the uneasy soldier was thus rushing from point to point, hazarding his life, and more than once shedding his blood, in the enterprises that signalized his war in his most western.

This dangerous career, however, was at length suddenly and mysteriously checked. By the influence of some powerful agency that was never explained, the baron was induced to take his son, and embark once more for the land of their fathers, from which the former had never been known to return. For many years all those inquiries which the laudable curiosity of the townsmen and townswomen of Mrs. Lechmere prompted them to make, concerning the fate of her nephew (and we leave each of our readers to determine their numbers), were answered by that lady with the most courteous reserve; and sometimes with such exhibitions of emotion, as we have already attempted to describe in her first interview with his son. But constant dropping will wear away a stone. At first there were rumors that the baronet had committed treason, and had been compelled to exchange Ravenscliffe for a less comfortable dwelling in the Tower of London. This report was succeeded by that of an unfortunate private marriage with one of the princesses of the house of Brunswick; but a reference to the calendars of the day showed, that there was no lady of a suitable age disengaged; and this amour, so creditable to the provinces, was necessarily abandoned. Finally, the assertion was made, with much more of the confidence of truth, that the unhappy Sir Lionel was the tenant of a private mad-house.

The instant this rumor was circulated, a film fell from every eye, and none were so blind as not to have seen indications of insanity in the baronet long before; and not a few were enabled to trace his legitimate right to lunacy through the hereditary bias of his race. To account for its sudden exhibition, was a more difficult task and exercised the ingenuity of an exceedingly ingenious people for a long period.

The more sentimental part of the community, such as the maidens and bachelors, and those votaries of Hymen who had twice and thrice proved the solacing power of the god, did not fail to ascribe the misfortune of the baronet to the unhappy loss of his wife, a lady to whom he was known to be most passionately attached. A few, the relics of the good old school, under whose intellectual sway the incarnate persons of so many godless dealers in necromancy had been made to expiate for their abominations, pointed to the calamity as a merited punishment on the backslidings of a family that

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had once known the true faith; while the third, and by no means a small class, composed of those worthies who braved the elements in King Street, in quest of filthy lucre, did not hesitate to say, that the sudden acquisition of vast wealth had driven many a better man mad. But the time was approaching, when the apparently irresistible propensity to speculate on the fortunes of a fellow-creature was made to yield to more important considerations. The hour soon arrived when the merchant forgot his momentary interests to look keenly into the distant effects that were to succeed the movements of the day; which taught the fanatic the wholesome lesson, that Providence smiled most beneficently on those who most merited, by their own efforts, its favors; and which even purged the breast of the sentimentalist of its sickly tenant, to be succeeded by the healthy and ennobling passion of love of country.

It was about this period that the contest for principle between the Parliament of Great Britain, and the colonies of North America, commenced, that in time led to those important results which have established a new era in political liberty, as well as a mighty empire. A brief glance at the nature of this controversy may assist in rendering many of the allusions in this legend more intelligible to some of its readers.

The increasing wealth of the provinces had attracted the notice of the English ministry so early as the year 1763. In that year the first effort to raise a revenue which was to meet the exigencies of the empire, was attempted by the passage of a law to impose a duty on certain stamped paper, which was made necessary to give validity to contracts. This method of raising a revenue was not new in itself, nor was the imposition heavy in amount. But the Americans, not less sagacious than wary, perceived at a glance the importance of the principles involved in the admission of a right as belonging to any body to lay taxes, in which they were not represented. The question was not without its difficulties, but the direct and plain argument was clearly on the side of the colonists. Aware of the force of their reasons, and perhaps a little conscious of the strength of their numbers, they approached the subject with a spirit which betokened this consciousness, but with a coolness that denoted the firmness of their purpose. After a struggle of nearly two years, during which the law was rendered completely profitless by the unanimity among the people, as well as by a species of good-humored violence that rendered it exceedingly inconvenient, and perhaps a little dangerous, to the servants of the crown to exercise their obnoxious functions, the ministry abandoned the measure. But, at the same time that the law was repealed, the Parliament maintained its right to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever, by recording a resolution to that effect in its journals.

That an empire, whose several parts were separated by oceans, and whose interests were so often conflicting, should become unwieldy, and fall, in time, by its own weight, was an event that all wise men must have expected to arrive. But, that the Americans did not contemplate such a division at that early day, may be fairly inferred, if there were no other testimony in the matter, by the quiet and submission that pervaded the colonies the instant that the repeal of the stamp act was known. Had any desire for premature independence existed, the Parliament had unwisely furnished abundant fuel to feed the flame, in the very resolution already mentioned. But, satisfied with the solid advantages they had secured, peaceful in their habits, and loyal in their feelings, the colonists laughed at the empty dignity of their self-constituted rulers, while they congratulated each other on their own more substantial success. If the besotted servants of the king had learned wisdom by the past, the storm would have blown over, and another age would have witnessed the events which we are about to relate. Things were hardly suffered, however, to return to their old channels again, before the ministry attempted to revive their claims by new impositions. The design to raise a revenue had been defeated in the case of the stamp act, by the refusal of the colonists to use the paper; but in the present instance, expedients were adopted, which, it was thought, would be more effective—as in the case of tea, where the duty was paid by the East-India Company in the first instance, and the

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exaction was to be made on the Americans, through their appetites. These new innovations on their rights were met by the colonists with the same promptitude, but with much more of seriousness than in the former instances. All the provinces south of the Great Lakes, acted in concert on this occasion; and preparations were made to render not only their remonstrances and petitions more impressive by a unity of action, but their more serious struggles also, should an appeal to force become necessary. The tea was stored or sent back to England, in most cases, though in the town of Boston a concurrence of circumstances led to the violent measure, on the part of the people, of throwing a large quantity of the offensive article into the sea. To punish this act, which took place in the early part of 1774, the port of Boston was closed, and different laws were enacted in Parliament, which were intended to bring the people back to a sense of their dependence on the British power.

Although the complaints of the colonists were hushed during the short interval that had succeeded the suspension of the efforts of the ministry to tax them, the feelings of alienation which were engendered by the attempt, had not time to be lost before the obnoxious subject was revived in its new shape. From 1763 to the period of our tale, all the younger part of the population of the provinces had grown into manhood, but they were no longer imbued with that profound respect for the mother-country which had been transmitted from their ancestors, or with that deep loyalty to the crown that usually characterizes a people who view the pageant of royalty through the medium of distance. Still, those who guided the feelings, and controlled the judgments of the Americans, were averse to a dismemberment of the empire, a measure which they continued to believe both impolitic and unnatural.

In the meantime, though equally reluctant to shed blood, the adverse parties prepared for that final struggle, which seemed to be unavoidably approaching. The situation of the colonies was now so peculiar, that it may be doubted whether history furnishes a precise parallel. Their fealty to the prince was everywhere acknowledged, while the laws which emanated from his counsellors were sullenly disregarded and set at naught. Each province possessed its distinct government, and in most of them the political influence of the crown was direct and great; but the time had arrived when it was superseded by a moral feeling that defied the machinations and intrigues of the ministry. Such of the provincial legislatures as possessed a majority of the "Sons of Liberty," as they who resisted the unconstitutional attempts of the ministry were termed, elected delegates to meet in a general congress to consult on the ways and means of effecting the common objects. In one or two provinces, where the inequality of representation afforded a different result, the people supplied the deficiencies by acting in their original capacity. This body, meeting, unlike conspirators, with the fearless confidence of integrity, and acting under the excitement of a revolution in sentiment, possessed an influence, which at a later day, has been denied to their more legally constituted successors. Their recommendations possessed all the validity of laws, without incurring their odium. While, as the organ of their fellow-subjects, they still continue to petition and remonstrate, they did not forget to oppose, by such means as were then thought expedient, the oppressive measures of the ministry.

An association was recommended to the people, for those purposes that are amply expressed in the three divisions which were significantly given to the subjects, in calling them by the several names of "non-importation," "non-exportation," and "non-consumption" resolutions. These negative expedients were all that was constitutionally in their power, and, throughout the whole controversy, there had been a guarded care not to exceed the limits which the laws had affixed to the rights of the subject. Though no overt act of resistance was committed, they did not, however, neglect such means as were attainable to be prepared for the last evil, whenever it should arrive. In this manner a feeling of resentment and disaffection was daily increasing throughout the provinces, while in Massachusetts Bay, the more immediate scene of our story, the disorder in the body politic seemed to be inevitably gathering to its head.

The great principles of the controversy

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had been blended, in different places, with various causes of local complaint, and in none more than in the town of Boston. The inhabitants of this place had been distinguished for an early, open, and fearless resistance to the ministry. An armed force had long been thought necessary to intimidate this spirit, to effect which the troops were drawn from different parts of the provinces, and concentrated in this devoted town. Early in 1774, a military man was placed in the executive chair of the province, and an attitude of more determination was assumed by the government. One of the first acts of this gentleman, who held the high station of lieutenant general, and who commanded all the forces of the king in America, was to dissolve the colonial assembly. About the same time a new charter was sent from England, and a material change was contemplated in the polity of the colonial government. From this moment the power of the king, though it was not denied, became suspended in the province. A provincial congress was elected, and assembled within seven leagues of the capital, where they continued, from time to time, to adopt such measures as the exigencies of the times were thought to render necessary. Men were enrolled, disciplined, and armed, as well as the imperfect means of the colony would allow. These troops, who were no more than the élite of the inhabitants, had little else to recommend them besides their spirit, and their manual dexterity with fire-arms. From the expected nature of their service, they were not unaptly termed "minute-men." The munitions of war were seized, and hoarded with a care and diligence that showed the character of the impending conflict.

On the other hand, General Gage adopted a similar course of preparation and prevention, by fortifying himself in the stronghold which he possessed, and by anticipating the intentions of the colonists, in their attempts to form magazines, whenever it was in his power. He had an easy task in the former, both from the natural situation of the place he occupied, and the species of force he commanded.

Surrounded by broad and chiefly by deep waters, except at one extremely narrow point, and possessing its triple hills, which are not commanded by any adjacent eminences, the peninsula of Boston could, with a competent garrison, easily be made impregnable, especially when aided by a superior fleet. The works erected by the English general were, however, by no means of magnitude; for it was well known that the whole park of the colonists could not exceed some half dozen pieces of field artillery, with a small battering train that must be entirely composed of old and cumbrous ship guns. Consequently, when Lionel arrived in Boston, he found a few batteries thrown up on the eminences, some of which were intended as much to control the town as to repel an enemy from without, while lines were drawn across the neck which communicated with the main. The garrison consisted of something less than five thousand men, besides which there was a fluctuating force of seamen and marines, as the vessels of war arrived and departed.

All this time, there was no other interruption to the intercourse between the town and the country, than such as unavoidably succeeded the stagnation of trade, and the distrust engendered by the aspect of affairs. Though numberless families had deserted their homes, many known whigs continued to dwell in their habitations, where their ears were deafened by the sounds of the British drums, and where their spirits were but too often galled by the sneers of the officers on the uncouth military preparations of their countrymen. Indeed, an impression had spread further than among the idle and thoughtless youths of the army, that the colonists were but little gifted with martial qualities; and many of their best friends in Europe were in dread, lest an appeal to force should put the contested points forever at rest, by proving the incompetency of the Americans to maintain them to the last extremity.

In this manner, both parties stood at bay; the people living in perfect order and quiet, without the administration of law, sullen, vigilant, and, through their leaders, secretly alert; and the army, gay, haughty, and careless of the consequences, though far from being oppressive or insolent, until after the defeat of one or two abortive excursions into the country in quest of arms. Each hour, however, was rapidly adding to the disaf-

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fection on one side, and to the contempt and resentment on the other, through numberless public and private causes, that belong rather to history than to a legend like this. All extraordinary occupations were suspended, and men awaited the course of things in anxious expectation. It was known that the Parliament, instead of retracing their political errors, had imposed new restraints, and, as has been mentioned, it was also rumored that regiments and fleets were on their way to enforce them.

How long a country could exist in such a primeval condition remained to be seen, though it was difficult to say when or how it was to terminate. The people of the land appeared to slumber; but, like vigilant and wary soldiers, they might be said to sleep on their arms; while the troops assumed, each day, more of that fearful preparation which gives, even to the trained warrior, a more martial aspect—though both parties still continued to manifest a becoming reluctance to shed blood.

CHAPTER VI.

"Would he were fatter:—but I fear him not:—
Seldom he smiles; and smiles in such a sort,
As if he mocked himself, and scorned his spirit,
That could be moved to smile at any thing."
—*Julius Cæsar.*

In the course of the succeeding week, Lionel acquired a knowledge of many minor circumstances relating to the condition of the colonies, which may be easily imagined as incidental to the times, but which would greatly exceed our limits to relate. He was received by his brethren in arms, with that sort of cordiality that a rich, high-spirited, and free, if not a jovial comrade, was certain of meeting among men who lived chiefly for pleasure and appearance. Certain indications of more than usually important movements were discovered among the troops, the first day of the week, and his own condition in the army was in some measure affected by the changes. Instead of joining his particular regiment, he was ordered to hold himself in readiness to take a command in the light corps, which had begun its drill for the service that was peculiar to such troops. As it was well known that Boston was Major Lionel's place of nativity, the commander-in-chief, with the indulgence and kindness of his character, granted to him, however, a short respite from duty, in order that he might indulge in the feelings natural to his situation. It was soon generally understood, that Major Lincoln, though intending to serve with the army in America, should the sad alternative of an appeal to arms become necessary, had permission to amuse himself in such a manner as he saw fit, for two months from the date of his arrival. Those who affected to be more wise than common, saw, or thought they saw, in this arrangement, a deep laid plan on the part of Gage, to use the influence and address of the young provincial among his connections and natural friends, to draw them back to those sentiments of loyalty which it was feared so many among them had forgotten to entertain. But it was the characteristic of the times to attach importance to trifling incidents, and to suspect a concealed policy in movements which emanated only in inclination.

There was nothing, however, in the deportment, or manner of life adopted by Lionel, to justify any of these conjectures. He continued to dwell in the house of Mrs. Lechmere, in person, though, unwilling to burden the hospitality of his aunt too heavily, he had taken lodgings in a dwelling at no great distance, where his servants resided, and where it was generally understood, that his visits of ceremony and friendship were to be received. Captain Polwarth did not fail to complain loudly of this arrangement, as paralyzing at once all the advantages he had anticipated from enjoying the entré to the dwelling of his mistress, in the right of his friend. But as the establishment of Lionel was supported with much of that liberality which was becoming in a youth of his large fortune, the exuberant light-infantry officer found many sources of consolation in the change, which could not have existed, had the staid Mrs. Lechmere presided over the domestic department. Lionel and Polwarth had been boys together at the same school, members of the same college at Oxford, and subsequently, for many years, comrades in the same corps. Though, perhaps, no two men in their regiment were more essentially different in men-

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tal as well as physical constitution, yet, by that unaccountable caprice, which causes us to like our opposites, it is certain that no two gentlemen in the service were known to be on better terms, or to maintain a more close and unreserved intimacy. It is unnecessary to dilate here on this singular friendship; it occurs every day, between men still more discordant, the result of accident and habit, and is often, as in the present instance, cemented by unconquerable good-nature in one of the parties. For this latter qualification Captain Polwarth was eminent, if for no other. It contributed quite as much as his science in the art of living to the thriving condition of the corporeal moiety of the man, and it rendered a communion with the less material part at all times inoffensive, if not agreeable.

On the present occasion, the captain took charge of the internal economy of Lionel's lodgings, with a zeal which he did not even pretend was disinterested. By the rules of the regiment he was compelled to live nominally with the mess, where he found his talents and his wishes fettered by divers indispensable regulations, and economical practices, that could not be easily overleaped; but with Lionel, just such an opportunity offered for establishing rules of his own, and disregarding expenditure, as he had been long pining for in secret. Though the poor of the town were, in the absence of employment, necessarily supported by large contributions of money, clothing, and food, which were transmitted to their aid from the furthermost parts of the colonies, the markets were not yet wanting in all the necessaries of life, to those who enjoyed the means of purchasing. With this disposition of things, therefore, he became well content, and within the first fortnight after the arrival of Lionel, it became known to the mess that Captain Polwarth took his dinners regularly with his old friend, Major Lincoln; though in truth the latter was enjoying, more than half the time, the hospitality of the respective tables of the officers of the staff.

In the meantime Lionel cultivated his acquaintance in Tremont Street, where he still slept, with an interest and assiduity that the awkwardness of his first interview would not have taught us to expect. With Mrs. Lechmere, it is true, he made but little progress in intimacy; for, equally formal, though polite, she was at all times enshrouded in a cloud of artificial, but cold management, that gave him little opportunity, had he possessed the desire, to break through the reserve of her calculating temperament. With his more youthful kinswomen, the case was, however, in a very few days, entirely reversed. Agnes Danforth, who had nothing to conceal, began insensibly to yield to the manliness and grace of his manner, and before the end of the first week, she maintained the rights of the colonists, laughed at the follies of the officers, and then acknowledged her own prejudices, with a familiarity and good-humor that soon made her, in her turn, a favorite with her English cousin, as she termed Lionel. But he found the demeanor of Cecil Dynevor much more embarrassing, if not inexplicable. For days she would be distant, silent, and haughty, and then again, as it were by sudden impulses, she became easy and natural; her whole soul beaming in her speaking eyes, or her innocent and merry humor breaking through the bounds of her restraint, and rendering not only herself, but all around her, happy and delighted. Full many an hour did Lionel ponder on this unaccountable difference in the manner of this young lady, at different moments. There was a secret excitement in the very caprices of her humors, that had a piquant interest in his eyes, and which, aided by her exquisite form and intelligent face, gradually induced him to become a more close observer of their waywardness, and consequently a more assiduous attendant on her movements. In consequence of this assiduity, the manner of Cecil grew, almost imperceptibly, less variable, and more uniformly fascinating, while Lionel, by some unaccountable oversight, soon forgot to note its changes, or even to miss the excitement.

In a mixed society, where pleasure, company, and a multitude of objects, conspired to distract the attention, such alterations would be the result of an intercourse for months, if they ever occurred; but in a town like Boston, from which most of those with whom Cecil had once mingled were already fled, and where, consequently, those who remained behind lived chiefly for themselves and by themselves, they were no more than the

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obvious effect of very apparent causes. In this manner something like good-will, if not a deeper interest in each other, was happily effected within that memorable fortnight, which was teeming with events vastly more important in their results than any that can appertain to the fortunes of a single family.

The winter of 1774–5 had been as remarkable for its mildness, as the spring was cold and lingering. Like every season in our changeable climate, however, the chilling days of March and April were intermingled with some, when a genial sun recalled the ideas of summer, which, in their turn, were succeeded by others, when the torrents of cold rain, that drove before the easterly gales, would seem to repel every advance toward a milder temperature. Many of those stormy days occurred in the middle of April, and during their continuance Lionel was necessarily compelled to keep himself housed.

He had retired from the parlor of Mrs. Lechmere, one evening when the rain was beating against the windows of the house, in nearly horizontal lines, to complete some letters which, before dining, he had commenced to the agent of his family, in England. On entering his own apartment, he was startled to find the room, which he had left vacant, and which he expected to find in the same state, occupied in a manner that he could not anticipate. The light of a strong wood fire was blazing on the hearth, and throwing about, in playful changes, the flickering shadows of the furniture, and magnifying each object into some strange and fantastical figure. As he stepped within the door, his eye fell upon one of these shadows, which extended along the wall, and, bending against the ceiling, exhibited the gigantic but certain outlines of the human form. Recollecting that he had left his letters open, and a little distrusting the discretion of Meriton, Lionel advanced lightly, for a few feet, so far as to be able to look round the drapery of his bed, and, to his amazement, perceived that the intruder was not his valet, but the aged stranger. The old man sat holding in his hand the open letter which Lionel had been writing, and continued so deeply absorbed in its contents, that the footsteps of the other were still disregarded. A large, coarse overcoat, dripping with water, concealed most of his person, though the white hairs that strayed about his face, and the deep lines of his remarkable countenance, could not be mistaken.

"I was ignorant of this unexpected visit," said Lionel, advancing quickly into the centre of the room, "or I should not have been so tardy in returning to my apartment, where, sir, I fear you must have found your time irksome, with nothing but that scrawl to amuse you."

The old man dropped the paper from before his features, and betrayed, by the action, the large drops that followed each other down his hollow cheeks, until they fell even to the floor. The haughty and displeased look disappeared from the countenance of Lionel at this sight, and he was on the point of speaking in a more conciliating manner, when the stranger, whose eye had not quailed before the angry frown it encountered, anticipated his intention.

"I comprehend you, Major Lincoln," he said, calmly; "but there can exist justifiable reasons for a greater breach of faith than this, of which you accuse me. Accident, and not intention, has put me in possession, here, of your most secret thoughts on a subject that has deep interest for me. You have urged me often, during our voyage, to make you acquainted with all that you most desire to know; to which request, as you may remember, I have ever been silent."

"You have said, sir, that you are master of a secret in which my feelings, I will acknowledge, are deeply interested, and I have urged you to remove my doubts by declaring the truth; but I do not perceive——"

"How a desire to possess my secret gives me a claim to inquire into yours, you would say," interrupted the stranger; "nor does it. But an interest in your affairs, that you cannot yet understand, and which is vouched for by these scalding tears, the first that have fallen in years from a fountain that I had thought dried, should, and must, satisfy you."

"It does," said Lionel, deeply affected by the melancholy tones of his voice, "it does, it does, and I will listen to no further explanation on the unpleasant subject. You see nothing there, I am sure, of which a son can have reason to be ashamed."

"I see much here, Lionel Lincoln, of which

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a father would have reason to be proud," returned the old man. "It was the filial love which you have displayed in this paper, which has drawn these drops from my eyes; for he who has lived as I have done, beyond the age of man, without knowing the love that the parent feels for its offspring, or which the child bears to the author of its being, must have outlived his natural sympathies, not to be conscious of his misfortune, when chance makes him sensible of affections like these."

"You have never been a father, then?" said Lionel, drawing a chair nigh to his aged companion, and seating himself with an air of powerful interest, that he could not control.

"Have I not told you that I am alone?" returned the old man, with a solemn manner. After an impressive pause, he continued, though his tones were husky and low—"I have been both husband and parent, in my day, but 'tis so long since, that no selfish tie remains to bind me to earth. Old age is the neighbor of death, and the chill of the grave is to be found in its warmest breathings."

"Say not so," interrupted Lionel, "for you do injustice to your own warm nature—you forget your zeal in behalf of what you deem these oppressed colonies."

"'Tis no more than the flickering of the dying lamp, which flares and dazzles most when its source of heat is nighest to extinction. But though I may not infuse into your bosom a warmth that I do not possess myself, I can point out the dangers with which life abounds, and serve as a beacon, when no longer useful as a pilot. It is for such a purpose, Major Lincoln, that I have braved the tempest of to-night."

"Has anything occurred, which, by rendering danger pressing, can make such an exposure necessary?"

"Look at me," said the old man, earnestly—"I have seen most of this flourishing country a wilderness; my recollection goes back into those periods when the savage, and the beast of the forest, contended with our fathers for much of that soil which now supports its hundreds of thousands in plenty; and my time is to be numbered, not by years, but by ages. For such a being, think you there can yet be many months, or weeks, or even days, in store?"

Lionel dropped his eyes, in embarrassment, to the floor, as he answered—

"You cannot have very many years, surely, to hope for; but with the activity and temperance you possess, days and months confine you, I trust, in limits much too small."

"What!" exclaimed the other, stretching forth a colorless hand, in which even the prominent veins partook in the appearance of a general decay of nature; "with these wasted limbs, these gray hairs, and this sunken and sepulchral cheek, would you talk to me of years! to me, who have not the effrontery to petition for even minutes, were they worth the prayer—so long already has been my probation!"

"It is certainly time to think of the change, when it approaches so very near."

"Well, then, Lionel Lincoln, old, feeble, and on the threshold of eternity as I stand, yet am I not nearer to my grave than that country, to which you have pledged your blood, is to a mighty convulsion, which will shake her institutions to their foundations."

"I cannot admit the signs of the times to be quite so portentous as your fears would make them," said Lionel, smiling a little proudly. "Though the worst that is apprehended should arrive, England will feel the shock but as the earth bears an eruption of one of its volcanoes! But we talk in idle figures, sir: know you anything to justify the apprehension of immediate danger?"

The face of the stranger lighted with a sudden and startling gleam of intelligence, and a sarcastic smile passed across his wan features, as he answered slowly—

"They only have cause to fear who will be the losers by the change! A youth who casts off the trammels of his guardians is not apt to doubt his ability to govern himself. England has held these colonies so long in leading-strings, that she forgets her offspring is able to go alone."

"Now, sir, you exceed even the wild projects of the most daring among those who call themselves the 'Sons of Liberty'—as if liberty existed in any place more favored or more nurtured than under the blessed constitution of England! The utmost required is what they term a redress of grievances, many of which, I must think, exist only in imagination."

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"Was a stone ever known to roll upward? Let there be but one drop of American blood spilt in anger, and its stain will become indelible."

"Unhappily, the experiment has been already tried; and yet years have rolled by, while England keeps her footing and authority good."

"Her authority!" repeated the old man; "see you not, Major Lincoln, in the forbearance of this people, when they felt themselves in the wrong, the existence of the very principles that will render them invincible and unyielding when right? But we waste our time—I came to conduct you to a place where, with your own ears, and with your own eyes, you may hear and see a little of that spirit which pervades the land—You will follow?"

"Not surely in such a tempest!"

"This tempest is but a trifle to that which is about to break upon you, unless you retrace your steps; but follow, I repeat; if a man of my years disregards the night, ought an English soldier to hesitate?"

The pride of Lionel was touched; and remembering an engagement he had previously made with his aged friend to accompany him to a scene like this, he made such changes in his dress as would serve to conceal his profession, threw on a large cloak to protect his person, and was about to lead the way himself, when he was aroused by the voice of the other.

"You mistake the route," he said; "this is to be a secret, and I hope a profitable visit—none must know of your presence; and if you are a worthy son of your honorable father, I need hardly add that my faith is pledged for your discretion."

"The pledge will be respected, sir," said Lionel, haughtily; "but in order to see what you wish, we are not to remain here?"

"Follow, then, and be silent," said the old man, turning and opening the doors which led into a little apartment lighted by one of those smaller windows, already mentioned in describing the exterior of the building. The passage was dark and narrow; but, observing the warnings of his companion, Lionel succeeded in descending, in safety, a flight of steps which formed a private communication between the offices of the dwelling and its upper apartments. They paused an instant at the bottom of the stairs, where the youth expressed his amazement that a stranger should be so much more familiar with the building than he who had for so many days made it his home.

"Have I not often told you," returned the old man, with a severity in his voice which was even apparent in its suppressed tones, "that I have known Boston for near a hundred years! How many edifices like this does it contain, that I should not have noted its erection! But follow in silence, and be prudent."

He now opened a door which conducted them through one end of the building, into the courtyard in which it was situated. As they emerged into the open air, Lionel perceived the figure of a man, crouching under the walls, as if seeking a shelter from the driving rain. The moment they appeared, this person arose, and followed as they moved toward the street.

"Are we not watched?" said Lionel, stopping to face the unknown; "whom have we skulking in our footsteps?"

"'Tis the boy," said the old man,—for whom we must adopt the name of Ralph, which it would appear was the usual term used by Job when addressing his mother's guest—"'tis the boy, and he can do us no harm. God has granted to him a knowledge between much of what is good, and that which is evil, though the mind of the child is, at times, sadly weakened by his bodily ailings. His heart, however, is with his country, at a moment when she needs all hearts to maintain her rights."

The young British officer bowed his head to meet the tempest, and smiled scornfully within the folds of his cloak, which he drew more closely around his form, as they met the gale in the open streets of the town. They had passed swiftly through many narrow and crooked ways, before another word was uttered between the adventurers. Lionel mused on the singular and indefinable interest that he took in the movements of his companion, which could draw him at a time like this from the shelter of Mrs. Lechmere's roof, to wander he knew not whither, and on an errand which might even be dangerous to his person. Still he followed, unhesitatingly; for with these passing thoughts was blended

the recollection of the many recent and interesting communications he had held with the old man during their long and close association in the ship; nor was he wanting in a natural interest for all that involved the safety and happiness of the place of his birth. He kept the form of his aged guide in his eye, as the other moved before him, careless of the tempest which beat on his withered frame, and he heard the heavy footsteps of Job in his rear, who had closed so near his own person as to share, in some measure, in the shelter of his ample cloak. But no other living being seemed to have ventured abroad; and even the few sentinels they passed, instead of pacing in front of those doors which it was their duty to guard, were concealed behind the angles of walls, or sought shelter under the projections of some favoring roof. At moments the wind rushed into the narrow avenues of the streets, along which it swept, with a noise not unlike the hollow roaring of the sea, and with a violence which was nearly irresistible. At such times Lionel was compelled to pause, and even frequently to recede a little from his path, while his guide, supported by his high purpose, and but little obstructed by his garments, seemed, to the bewildered imagination of his follower, to glide through the night with a facility that was supernatural. At length the old man, who had got some distance ahead of his followers, suddenly paused, and allowed Lionel to approach to his side. The latter observed with surprise, that he had stopped before the root and stump of a tree, which had once grown on the borders of the street, and which appeared to have been recently felled.

"Do you see this remnant of the elm?" said Ralph, when the others had stopped also; "their axes have succeeded in destroying the mother-plant, but her scions are flourishing throughout the continent!"

"I do not comprehend you!" returned Lionel; "I see here nothing but the stump of some tree; surely the ministers of the king are not answerable that it stands no longer?"

"The ministers of the king are answerable to their master, that it has ever become what it is—but speak to the boy at your side; he will tell you of its virtues."

Lionel turned towards Job, and perceived by the obscure light of the moon, to his surprise, that the changeling stood with his head bared to the storm, regarding the root with an extraordinary degree of reverence.

"This is all a mystery to me!" he said; "what do you know about this stump to stand in awe of, boy?"

"'Tis the root of 'Liberty-tree,'" said Job, "and 'tis wicked to pass it without making your manners!"

"And what has this tree done for liberty, that it has merited so much respect?"

"What! why, did you ever see a tree afore this that could write and give notices of town-meetin'-da's, or that could tell the people what the king meant to do with the tea and his stamps?"

"And could this marvellous tree work such miracles?"

"To be sure it could, and it did too—you let stingy Tommy think to get above the people with any of his cunning over-night, and you might come here next morning, and read a warning on the bark of this tree, that would tell all about it, and how to put down his deviltries, written out fair, in a hand as good as Master Lovell himself could put on paper, the best day of his grand scholarship."

"And who put the paper there?"

"Who!" exclaimed Job, a little positively; "why, Liberty came in the night, and pasted it up herself. When Nab couldn't get a house to live in, Job used to sleep under the tree, sometimes; and many a night has he seen Liberty, with his own eyes, come and put up the paper."

"And was it a woman?"

"Do you think Liberty was such a fool as to come every time in woman's clothes, to be followed by the rake-helly soldiers about the streets?" said Job, with great contempt in his manner. "Sometimes she did, though, and sometimes she didn't; just as it happened. And Job was in the tree when old Noll had to give up his ungodly stamps; though he didn't do it till the 'Sons of Liberty' had chucked his stamp shop in the dock, and hung him and Lord Boot together, on the branches of the old Elm!"

"Hung!" said Lionel, unconsciously drawing back from the spot. "Was it ever a gallows?"

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"Yes, for iffigies," said Job, laughing; "I wish you could have been here to see how the old boot, with Satan sticking out on't, whirled about when they swung it off! They give the old boy a big shoe to put his cloven huff in!"

Lionel, who was familiar with the peculiar sound that his townsmen gave to the letter *u*, now comprehended the allusion to the Earl of Bute, and, beginning to understand more clearly the nature of the transactions, and the uses to which that memorable tree had been applied, he expressed his desire to proceed.

The old man had suffered Job to make his own explanations, though not without a curious interest in the effect they would produce on Lionel; but the instant the request was made to advance, he turned, and once more led the way. Their course was now directed more toward the wharves; nor was it long before their conductor turned into a narrow court, and entered a house of rather mean appearance, without even observing the formality of announcing his visit by the ordinary summons of rapping at its door. A long, narrow, and dimly-lighted passage conducted them to a spacious apartment far in the court, which appeared to have been fitted as a place for the reception of large assemblages of people. In this room were collected at least a hundred men, seemingly intent on some object of more than usual interest, by the gravity and seriousness of demeanor apparent in every countenance.

As it was Sunday, the first impression of Lionel, on entering the room, was that his old friend, who often betrayed a keen sensibility on subjects of religion, had brought him there with a design to listen to some favorite exhorter of his own peculiar tenets, and as a tacit reproach for a neglect of the usual ordinances of that holy day, of which the conscience of the young man suddenly accused him, on finding himself unexpectedly mingled in such a throng. But after he had forced his person among a dense body of men, who stood at the lower end of the apartment, and became a silent observer of the scene, he was soon made to perceive his error. The weather had induced all present to appear in such garments as were best adapted to protect them from its fury; and their exteriors were rough, and perhaps a little forbidding; but there was a composure and decency in the air common to the whole assembly, which denoted that they were men who possessed, in a high degree, the commanding quality of self-respect. A very few minutes sufficed to teach Lionel that he was in the midst of a meeting collected to discuss questions connected with the political movements of the times, though he felt himself a little at a loss to discover the precise results it was intended to produce. To every question there were one or two speakers, men who expressed their ideas in a familiar manner, and with the peculiar tones and pronunciation of the province, that left no room to believe them to be orators of a higher character than the mechanics and tradesmen of the town. Most, if not all of them, wore an air of deliberation and coldness that would have rendered their sincerity in the cause they had apparently espoused a little equivocal, but for occasional expressions of coarse, and sometimes biting, invective that they expended on the ministers of the crown, and for the perfect and firm unanimity that was manifested, as each expression of the common feeling was taken, after the manner of deliberative bodies. Certain resolutions, in which the most respectful remonstrances were singularly blended with the boldest assertions of constitutional principles, were read and passed without a dissenting voice, though with a calmness that indicated no very strong excitement. Lionel was peculiarly struck with the language of these written opinions, which were expressed with a purity, and sometimes with an elegance of style, which plainly showed that the acquaintance of the sober artisan with the instrument through whose periods he was blundering was quite recent, and far from being very intimate. The eyes of the young soldier wandered from face to face, with a strong desire to detect the secret movers of the scene he was witnessing; nor was he long without selecting one individual as an object peculiarly deserving of his suspicions. It was a man apparently but just entering into middle age, of an appearance, both in person and in such parts of his dress as escaped from beneath his overcoat, that denoted him to be of a class altogether superior to the mass of the assembly. A deep but

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manly respect was evidently paid to this gentleman by those who stood nearest to his person; and once or twice there were close and earnest communications passing between him and the more ostensible leaders of the meeting, which roused the suspicions of Lionel in the manner related. Notwithstanding the secret dislike that the English officer suddenly conceived against a man that he fancied was thus abusing his powers, by urging others to acts of insubordination, he could not conceal from himself the favorable impression made by the open, fearless, and engaging countenance of the stranger. Lionel was so situated as to be able to keep his person, which was partly concealed by the taller forms that surrounded him, in constant view; nor was it long before his earnest and curious gaze caught the attention of the other. Glances of marked meaning were exchanged between them during the remainder of the evening, until the chairman announced that the objects of the convocation were accomplished, and dissolved the meeting.

Lionel raised himself from his reclining attitude against the wall, and submitted to be carried by the current of human bodies into the dark passage, through which he had entered the room. Here he lingered a moment, with a view to recover his lost companion, and with a secret wish to scan more narrowly the proceedings of the man, whose air and manner had so long chained his attention. The crowd had sensibly diminished before he was aware that few remained beside himself, nor would he then have discovered that he was likely to become an object of suspicion to those few, had not a voice at his elbow recalled his recollection.

"Does Major Lincoln meet his countrymen to-night as one who sympathizes with their wrongs, or as the favored and prosperous officer of the crown?" asked the very man for whose person he had so long been looking in vain.

"Is sympathy with the oppressed incompatible with loyalty to my prince?" demanded Lionel.

"That it is not," said the stranger, in a friendly accent, "is apparent from the conduct of many gallant Englishmen among us, who espouse our cause—but we claim Major Lincoln as a countryman."

"Perhaps, sir, it would be indiscreet just now to disavow that title, let my dispositions be as they may," returned Lionel, smiling a little haughtily; "this may not be as secure a spot in which to avow one's sentiments, as the town common, or the palace of St. James."

"Had the king been present to-night, Major Lincoln, would he have heard a single sentence opposed to that constitution, which has declared him a member too sacred to be offended?"

"Whatever may have been the legality of your sentiments, sir, they surely have not been expressed in language altogether fit for a royal ear."

"It may not have been adulation, or even flattery, but it is truth—a quality no less sacred than the rights of kings."

"This is neither a place nor an occasion, sir," said the young soldier, quickly, "to discuss the rights of our common master; but if, as from your manner and your language I think not improbable, we should meet hereafter in a higher sphere, you will not find me at a loss to vindicate his claims."

The stranger smiled with meaning, and as he bowed before he fell back and was lost in the darkness of the passage, he replied—

"Our fathers have often met in such society, I believe; God forbid that their sons should ever encounter in a less friendly manner."

Lionel, now finding himself alone, groped his way into the street, where he perceived Ralph and the changeling in waiting for his appearance. Without demanding the cause of the other's delay, the old man proceeded by the side of his companions, with the same indifference to the tempest as before, toward the residence of Mrs. Lechmere.

"You have now had some evidence of the spirit that pervades this people," said Ralph, after a few moments of silence; "think you still there is no danger that the volcano will explode?"

"Surely everything I have heard and seen to-night confirms such an opinion," returned Lionel. "Men on the threshold of rebellion seldom reason so closely, and with such moderation. Why, the very fuel for the combustion, the rabble themselves, discuss their constitutional principles, and keep

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under the mantle of law, as though they were a club of learned Templars."

"Think you that the fire will burn less steadily, because what you call the fuel has been prepared by the seasoning of time?" returned Ralph. "But this comes from sending a youth into a foreign land for his education! The boy rates his sober and earnest countrymen on a level with the peasants of Europe."

So much Lionel was able to comprehend; but notwithstanding the old man muttered vehemently to himself for some time longer, it was in a tone too indistinct for his ear to understand his meaning. When they arrived in a part of the town, with which Lionel was familiar, his aged guide pointed out his way, and took his leave, saying—

"I see that nothing but the last and dreadful argument of force, will convince you of the purpose of the Americans to resist their oppressors. God avert the evil hour! but when it shall come, as come it must, you will learn your error, young man, and, I trust, will not disregard the natnral ties of country and kindred."

Lionel would have spoken in reply, but the rapid steps of Ralph rendered his wishes vain; for, before he had time for utterance, his emaciated form was seen gliding, like an immaterial being, through the sheets of driving rain, and was soon lost to the eye, as it vanished in the dim shades of night, followed by the more substantial frame of the idiot.

CHAPTER VII.

"Sergeant, you shall. Thus are poor servitors
When others sleep upon their quiet beds,
Constrained to watch in darkness, rain and cold."
—*King Henry VI.*

Two or three days of fine, balmy, spring weather succeeded to the storm, during which Lionel saw no more of his aged fellow-voyager. Job, however, attached himself to the British soldier with a confiding helplessness that touched the heart of his young protector, who gathered from the circumstances a just opinion of the nature of the abuses that the unfortunate changeling was frequently compelled to endure from the brutal soldiery. Meriton performed the functions of master of the wardrobe to the lad, by Lionel's express commands, with evident disgust, but with manifest advantage to the external appearance, if with no very sensible evidence of additional comfort to his charge. During this short period, the slight impression made on Lionel by the scene related in the preceding chapter, faded before the cheerful changes of the season, and the increasing interest which he felt in the society of his youthful kinswomen. Polwarth relieved him from all cares of a domestic nature, and the peculiar shade of sadness, which at times had been so very perceptible in his countenance, was changed to a look of a more brightening and cheerful character. Polwarth and Lionel had found an officer, who had formerly served in the same regiment with them in the British Islands, in command of a company of grenadiers, which formed part of the garrison of Boston. This gentleman, an Irishman, of the name of M'Fuse was qualified to do great honor to the culinary skill of the officer of light infantry, by virtue of a keen natural gusto for whatever possessed the inherent properties of a savory taste, though utterly destitute of any of that remarkable scientific knowledge which might be said to distinguish the other in the art. He was, in consequence of this double claim on the notice of Lionel, a frequent guest at the nightly banquets prepared by Polwarth. Accordingly, we find him, on the evening of the third day in the week, seated with his two friends, around a board plentifully garnished by the care of that gentleman, on the preparations for which more than usual skill had been exerted, if the repeated declarations of the disciple of Heliogabalus, to that effect, were entitled to any ordinary credit.

"In short, Major Lincoln," said Polwarth, in continuance of his favorite theme, while seated before the table, "a man may live anywhere, provided he possesses food—in England, or out of England, it matters not. Raiment may be necessary to appearance, but food is the only indispensable that nature has imposed on the animal world, and, in my opinion, there is a sort of obligation on every man to be satisfied, who has wherewithal to appease the cravings of his appetite.—Cap-

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tain M'Fuse, I will thank you to cut that sirloin with the grain."

"What matters it, Polly," said the captain of grenadiers, with a slight Irish accent, and with the humor of his countrymen strongly depicted in his fine, open, manly features, "which way a bit of meat is divided, so there be enough to allay the cravings of the appetite, you will remember?"

"It is a collateral assistance to nature that should never be neglected," returned Polwarth, whose gravity and seriousness at his banquets were not easily disturbed; "it facilitates mastication and aids digestion, two considerations of great importance to military men, sir, who have frequently such little time for the former, and no rest after their meals to complete the latter."

"He reasons like an army contractor, who wishes to make one ration do the work of two, when transportation is high," said M'Fuse, winking to Lionel. "According to your principles, then, Polly, a potato is your true campaigner, for that is a cr'ature you may cut any way without disturbing the grain, provided the article be a little m'aly."

"Pardon me, Captain M'Fuse," said Polwarth, "a potato should be broken, and not cut at all—there is no vegetable more used and less understood than the potato."

"And is it you, Pater Polwarth, of Nesbitt's light-infantry," interrupted the grenadier, laying down his knife and fork with an air of infinite humor, "that will tell Dennis M'Fuse how to carve a potato? I will yield to the right of an Englishman over the chivalry of an ox, your sirloins, and your lady-rumps, if you please, but in my own country, one end of every farm is a bog, and the other a potato-field—'tis an Irishman's patrimony that you are making so free with, sir!"

"The possession of a thing, and the knowledge how to use it, are two very different properties——"

"Give me the property of possession, then," again interrupted the ardent grenadier, "especially when a morsel of the green island is in dispute; and trust an old soldier of the Royal Irish to carve his own enjoyments. Now I'll wager a month's pay, and that to me is as much as if the major should say, Done for a thousand, that you can't tell how many dishes can be made, and are made every day in Ireland, out of so simple a thing as a potato."

"You roast and boil, and use them in stuffing tame birds, sometimes, and——"

"All old woman's cookery!" interrupted M'Fuse, with an affectation of great contempt in his manner.—"Now, sir, we have them with butter, and without butter—that counts two; then we have the fruit p'aled; and——"

"Impaled," said Lionel, laughing. "I believe this nice controversy must be referred to Job, who is amusing himself in the corner there, I see, with the very subject of the dispute transfixed on his fork in the latter condition."

"Or suppose, rather," said M'Fuse, "as it is a matter to exercise the judgment of Solomon, we make a potato umpire of master Seth Sage, yonder, who should have some of the wisdom of the royal Jew, by the sagacity of his countenance as well as of his name."

"Don't you call Seth r'yal," said Job, suspending his occupation on the vegetable. "The king is r'yal and fla'nty, but neighbor Sage lets Job come in and eat, like a Christian."

"That lad there is not altogether without reason, Major Lincoln," said Polwarth; "on the contrary, he discovers an instinctive knowledge of good from evil, by favoring us with his company at the hour of meals."

"The poor fellow finds but little at home to tempt him to remain there, I fear," said Lionel; "and as he was one of the first acquaintances I made on returning to my native land, I have desired Mr. Sage to admit him at all proper hours; and especially, Polwarth, at those times when he can have an opportunity of doing homage to your skill."

"I am glad to see him," said Polwarth; "for I love an uninstructed palate, as much as I admire naïveté in a woman.—Be so good as to favor me with a cut from the breast of that wild goose, M'Fuse—not quite so far forward, if you please; your migratory birds are apt to be tough about the wing—but simplicity in eating is, after all, the great secret of life; that and a sufficiency of food."

"You may be right this time," replied the grenadier, laughing; "for this fellow made one of the flankers of the flock, and did double duty in wheeling, I believe, or I have

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got him against the grain too! But, Polly, you have not told us how you improve in your light-infantry exercises of late."

By this time Polwarth had made such progress in the essential part of his meal as to have recovered in some measure his usual tone of good-nature, and he answered with less gravity—

"If Gage does not work a reformation in our habits, he will fag us all to death. I suppose you know, Leo, that all the flank companies are relieved from the guards to learn a new species of exercise. They call it relieving us, but the only relief I find in the matter, is when we lie down to fire—there is a luxurious moment or two then, I must confess!"

"I have known the fact, any time these ten days, by your moanings," returned Lionel; "but what do you argue from this particular exercise, Captain M'Fuse? Does Gage contemplate more than the customary drills?"

"You question me now, sir, on a matter in which I am uninstructed," said the grenadier; "I am a soldier, and obey my orders, without pretending to inquire into their objects or merits; all I know is, that both grenadiers and light-infantry are taken from the guards; and that we travel over a good deal of solid earth each day, in the way of marching and counter-marching, to the manifest discomfiture and reduction of Polly, there, who loses flesh as fast as he gains ground."

"Do you think so, Mac?" cried the delighted captain of light-infantry; "then I have not all the detestable motion in vain. They have given us little Harry Skip as a drill officer, who, I believe, has the most restless foot of any man in his Majesty's service. Do you join with me in opinion, master Sage? you seem to meditate on the subject as if it had some secret charm."

The individual to whom Polwarth addressed this question, and who has been already named, was standing with a plate in his hand, in an attitude that bespoke close attention, with a sudden and deep interest in the discourse, though his eyes were bent on the floor, and his face was averted as if, while listening earnestly, he had a particular desire to be unnoticed. He was the owner of the house in which Lionel had taken his quarters. His family had been some time before removed into the country, under the pretence of his inability to maintain them in a place destitute of business and resources, like Boston; but he remained himself, for the double purpose of protecting his property and serving his guests. This man partook, in no small degree, of the qualities, both of person and mind, which distinguish a large class among his countrymen. In the former, he was rather over than under the middle stature; was thin, angular, and awkward, but possessing an unusual proportion of sinew and bone. His eyes were small, black, and scintillating, and it was not easy to fancy that the intelligence they manifested was unmingled with a large proportion of shrewd cunning. The rest of his countenance was meagre, sallow, and rigidly demure. Thus called upon, on a sudden, by Polwarth for an opinion, Seth answered, with the cautious reserve with which he invariably delivered himself—

"The adjutant is an uneasy man; but that, I suppose, is so much the better for a light-infantry officer. Captain Polwarth must find it considerable jading to keep the step, now the general has ordered these new doings with the soldier."

"And what may be your opinion of these doings, as you call them, Mr. Sage?" asked M'Fuse; "you, who are a man of observation, should understand your countrymen; will they fight?"

"A rat will fight if the cats pen him," said Seth, without raising his eyes from his occupation.

"But do the Americans conceive themselves to be penned?"

"Why, that is pretty much as people think, captain; the country was in great touse about the stamps and the tea, but I always said such folks as didn't give their notes-of-hand, and had no great relish for anything more than country food, wouldn't find themselves cramped by the laws, after all."

"Then you see no great oppression in being asked to pay your bit of a tax, master Sage," cried the grenadier, "to maintain such a worthy fellow as myself in a decent equipage to fight your battles."

"Why, as to that, captain, I suppose we

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can do pretty much the whole of our own fighting, when occasion calls; though I don't think there is much stomach for such doings among the people, without need."

"But what do you think the 'Committee of Safety,' and your 'Sons of Liberty,' as they call themselves, really mean, by their parades of 'minute-men,' their gathering of provisions, carrying off the cannon, and such other formidable and appalling preparations—ha! honest Seth? do they think to frighten British soldiers with the roll of a drum, or are they amusing themselves, like boys in the holidays, with playing war?"

"I should conclude," said Seth, with undisturbed gravity and caution, "that the people are pretty much engaged, and in earnest."

"To do what?" demanded the Irishman; "to forge their own chains, that we may fetter them in truth?"

"Why, seeing that they have burnt the stamps, and thrown the tea into the harbor," returned Seth, "and, since that, have taken the management into their own hands, I should rather conclude that they have pretty much determined to do what they think best."

Lionel and Polwarth laughed aloud, and the former observed—

"You appear not to come to conclusions with our host, Captain M'Fuse, notwithstanding so much is determined. Is it well understood, Mr. Sage, that large reinforcements are coming to the colonies, and to Boston in particular?"

"Why, yes," returned Seth; "it seems to be pretty generally contemplated on."

"And what is the result of these contemplations?"

Seth paused a moment, as if uncertain whether he was master of the other's meaning, before he replied—

"Why, as the country is considerably engaged in the business, there are some who think, if the ministers don't open the port, that it will be done without much further words by the people."

"Do you know," said Lionel, gravely, "that such an attempt would lead directly to a civil war?"

"I suppose it is safe to calculate that such doings would bring on disturbances," returned his phlegmatic host.

"And you speak of it, sir, as a thing not to be deprecated, or averted by every possible means in the power of the nation!"

"If the port is opened, and the right to tax given up," said Seth, calmly, "I can find a man in Boston, who'll engage to let them draw all the blood that will be spilt, from his own veins, for nothing."

"And who may that redoubtable individual be, Master Sage?" cried M'Fuse; "your own plethoric person?—How now, Doyle, to what am I indebted for the honor of this visit?"

This sudden question was put by the captain of grenadiers to the orderly of his own company, who at that instant filled the door of the apartment with his huge frame, in the attitude of military respect, as if about to address his officer.

"Orders have come down, sir, to parade the men at half an hour after tattoo, and to be in readiness for active service."

The three gentlemen rose together from their chairs at this intelligence, while M'Fuse exclaimed—"A night march! Pooh! We are to be sent back to garrison-duty, I suppose; the companies in the line grow sleepy, and wish a relief—Gage might have taken a more suitable time, than to put gentlemen on their march so soon after such a feast as this of yours, Polly."

"There is some deeper meaning to so extraordinary an order," interrupted Lionel; "there goes the tap of the tattoo, this instant! Are no other troops but your company ordered to parade?"

"The whole battalion is under the same orders, your honor, and so is the battalion of light-infantry; I was commanded to report it so to Captain Polwarth, if I saw him."

"This bears some meaning, gentlemen," said Lionel, "and it is necessary to be looked to. If either corps leaves the town to-night, I will march with it as a volunteer; for it is my business, just now, to examine into the state of the country."

"That we shall march to-night, is sure, your honor," added the sergeant, with the confidence of an old soldier; "but how far, or on what road, is known only to the officers of the staff; though the men think we are to go out by the colleges."

"And what has put so learned an opinion

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in their silly heads?" demanded his captain.

"One of the men who has been on leave, has just got in, and reports that a squad of gentlemen from the army dined near them, your honor, and that as night set in they mounted and began to patrol the roads in that direction. He was met and questioned by four of them as he crossed the flats."

"All this confirms my conjectures," cried Lionel—"there is a man who might now prove of important service—Job—where is the simpleton, Meriton?"

"He was called out, sir, a minute since, and has left the house."

"Then send in Mr. Sage," continued the young man, musing as he spoke. A moment after it was reported to him that Seth had strangely disappeared also.

"Curiosity has led him to the barracks," said Lionel, "where duty calls you, gentlemen. I will despatch a little business, and join you there in an hour; you cannot march short of that time."

The bustle of a general departure succeeded. Lionel threw his cloak into the arms of Meriton, to whom he delivered his orders, took his arms, and, making his apologies to his guests, he left the house with the manner of one who saw a pressing necessity to be prompt. M'Fuse proceeded to equip himself with the deliberation of a soldier who was too much practised to be easily disconcerted. Notwithstanding his great deliberation, the delay of Polwarth, however, eventually vanquished the patience of the grenadier, who exclaimed, on hearing the other repeat, for the fourth time, an order concerning the preservation of certain viands, to which he appeared to cling in spirit, after a carnal separation was directed by fortune.

"Poh! poh! man," exclaimed the Irishman, "why will you bother yourself on the eve of a march, with such epicurean propensities! It's the soldier who should show your hermits and anchorites an example of mortification; besides, Polly, this affectation of care and provision is the less excusable in yourself,—you, who have been well aware that we were to march on a secret expedition this very night on which you seem so much troubled."

"I!" exclaimed Polwarth; "as I hope to eat another meal, I am as ignorant as the meanest corporal in the army of the whole transaction—why do you suspect otherwise?"

"Trifles tell the old campaigner when and where the blow is to be struck," returned M'Fuse, coolly drawing his military overcoat tighter to his large frame; "have I not, with my own eyes, seen you, within the hour, provision a certain captain of light-infantry after a very heavy fashion? Damn it, man, do you think I have served these five-and-twenty years, and do not know that when a garrison begins to fill its granaries, it expects a siege?"

"I have paid no more than a suitable compliment to the entertainment of Major Lincoln," returned Polwarth; "but so far from having had any very extraordinary appetite, I have not found myself in a condition to do all the justice I could wish to several of the dishes.—Mr. Meriton, I will thank you to have the remainder of that bird sent down to the barracks, where my man will receive it; and, as it may be a long march, and a hungry one, add the tongue, and a fowl, and some of the ragout; we can warm it up at any farm-house—we'll take the piece of beef, Mac—Leo has a particular taste for a cold cut; and you might put up the ham, also; it will keep better than anything else, if we should be out long—and—and—I believe that will do, Meriton."

"I am as much rejoiced to hear it as I should be to hear a proclamation of war read at Charing-Cross," cried M'Fuse—you should have been a commissary, Polly—nature meant you for an army sutler!"

"Laugh as you will, Mac," returned the good-humored Polwarth; "I shall hear your thanks when we halt for breakfast; but I attend you now."

As they left the house, he continued, "I hope Gage means no more than to push us a little in advance with a view to protect the foragers and the supplies of the army—such a situation would have very pretty advantages; for a system might be established that would give the mess of the light corps the choice of the whole market."

"'Tis a mighty preparation about some old iron gun, which would cost a man his

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life to put a match to," returned M'Fuse, cavalierly; "for my part, Captain Polwarth, if we are to fight these colonists at all, I would do the thing like a man, and allow the lads to gather together a suitable arsenal, that when we come to blows, it may be a military affair—as it now stands, I should be ashamed, as I am a soldier and an Irishman, to bid my fellows pull a trigger, or make a charge, on a set of peasants, whose firearms look more like rusty water-pipes than muskets, and who have half a dozen cannon with touch-holes that a man may put his head in, with muzzles just large enough to throw marbles."

"I don't know, Mac," said Polwarth, while they diligently pursued their way toward the quarters of their men; "even a marble may destroy a man's appetite for his dinner; and the countrymen possess a great advantage over us in commanding the supplies—the difference in equipments would not more than balance the odds.

"I wish to disturb no gentleman's opinion on matters of military discretion, Captain Polwarth," said the grenadier, with an air of high martial pride; "but I take it there exists a material difference between a soldier and a butcher, though killing be a business common to both—I repeat, sir, I hope that this secret expedition is for a more worthy object than to deprive those poor devils, with whom we are about to fight, of the means of making a good battle; and I add, sir, that such is sound military doctrine, without regarding who may choose to controvert it."

"Your sentiments are generous and manly, Mac; but, after all, there is both a physical and moral obligation on every man to eat; and if starvation be the consequence of permitting your enemies to bear arms, it becomes a solemn duty to deprive them of their weapons—no—no—I will support Gage in such a measure, at present, as highly military."

"And he is much obliged to you, sir, for your support," returned the other—"I apprehend, Captain Polwarth, whenever the Lieutenant-General Gage finds it necessary to lean on any one for extraordinary assistance, he will remember that there is a regiment called the Royal Irish in the country, and that he is not entirely ignorant of the qualities of the people of his own nation.—You have done well, Captain Polwarth, to choose the light-infantry service—they are a set of foragers, and can help themselves, but the grenadiers, thank God, love to encounter men, and not cattle, in the field."

How long the good-nature of Polwarth would have endured the increasing taunts of the Irishman, who was exasperating himself, gradually, by his own arguments, there is no possibility of determining; for their arrival at the barracks put an end to the controversy and to the feelings it was beginning to engender.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Preserve thy sighs, unthrifty girl!
To purify the air;
Thy tears to thread, instead of pearl,
On bracelets of thy hair."—DAVENANT.

LIONEL might have blushed to acknowledge the secret and inexplicable influence which his unknown and mysterious friend, Ralph, had obtained over his feelings, but which induced him, on leaving his own quarters thus hastily, to take his way into the lower parts of the town, in quest of the residence of Abigail Pray. He had not visited the sombre tenement of this woman since the night of his arrival, but its proximity to the well-known town-hall, as well as the quaint architecture of the building itself, had frequently brought its exterior under his observation, in the course of his rambles through the place of his nativity. A guide being, consequently, unnecessary, he took the most direct and frequented route to the Dock Square. When Lionel issued into the street, he found a deep darkness already enveloping the peninsula of Boston, as if nature had lent herself to the secret designs of the British commandant. The fine strain of a shrill fife was playing among the naked hills of the place, accompanied by the occasional and measured taps of the sullen drum; and, at moments, the full, rich notes of the horns would rise from the common, and, borne on the night-air, sweep along the narrow streets, causing the nerves of the excited young soldier to thrill with a stern pleasure, as he stepped proudly along. The practised ear, however, detected no other sounds in the music than the usual nightly signal of rest; and when

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the last melting strains of the horns seemed to be lost in the clouds, a stillness fell upon the town, like the deep and slumbering quiet of midnight. He paused a moment before the gates of Province-House, and, after examining, with an attentive eye, the windows of the building, he spoke to the grenadier, who had stopped in his short walk, to note the curious stranger.

"You should have company within, sentinel," he said, "by the brilliant light from those windows."

The rattling of Lionel's side-arms, as he pointed with his hand in the direction of the illuminated apartment, taught the soldier that he was addressed by his superior, and he answered respectfully—

"It does not become one such as I to pretend to know much of what his betters do, your honor; but I stood before the quarters of General Wolfe the very night we went up to the Plains of Abram; and I think an old soldier can tell when a movement is at hand, without asking his superiors any impertinent questions."

"I suppose, from your remark, the general holds a council to-night?" said Lionel.

"No one has gone in, sir, since I have been posted," returned the sentinel, "but the lieutenant-colonel of the 10th, that great Northumbrian lord, and the old major of marines; a great war-dog is that old man, your honor, and it is not often he comes to Province-House for nothing."

"A good-night to you, my old comrade," said Lionel, walking away; "'tis probably some consultation concerning the new exercises that you practise."

The grenadier shook his head, as if unconcerned, and resumed his march with his customary steadiness. A very few minutes now brought Lionel before the low door of Abigail Pray, where he again stopped, struck with the contrast between the gloomy, dark, and unguarded threshold over which he was about to pass, and the gay portal he had just left. Urged, however, by his feelings, the young man paused but a moment before he tapped lightly for admission. After repeating his summons, and hearing no reply, he lifted the latch, and entered the building without further ceremony. The large and vacant apartment, in which he found himself, was silent and dreary as the still streets he had quitted. Groping his way toward the little room in the tower, where he had met the mother of Job, as before related, Lionel found that apartment also tenantless and dark. He was turning, in disappointment, to quit the place, when a feeble ray fell from the loft of the building, and settled on the foot of a rude ladder which formed the means of communication with its upper apartments. Hesitating a single moment now to decide, he then yielded to his anxiety, and ascended to the floor above, with steps as light as extreme caution could render them. Like the basement, the building was subdivided here, into a large, open ware-room, and a small, rudely-finished apartment in each of its towers. Following the rays from a candle, he stood on the threshold of one of these little rooms, in which he found the individual of whom he was in quest. The old man was seated on the only broken chair which the loft contained, and before him, on the simple bundle of straw which would seem, by the garments thrown loosely over the pile, to be intended as his place of rest, lay a large map, spread for inspection, which his glazed and sunken eyes appeared to be intently engaged in marking. Lionel hesitated again, while he regarded the white hairs which fell across the temples of the stranger, as he bowed his head in his employment, imparting a wild and melancholy expression to his remarkable countenance, and seeming to hallow their possessor by the air of great age and attendant care that they imparted.

"I have come to seek you," the young man at length said, "since you no longer deem me worthy of your care."

"You come too late," returned Ralph, without betraying the least emotion at the suddenness of the interruption, or even raising his eyes from the map he studied so intently; "too late at least to avert calamity, if not to learn wisdom from its lessons."

"You know, then, of the secret movements of the night?"

"Old age, like mine, seldom sleeps," returned Ralph, looking for the first time at his visitor; "for the eternal night of death promises a speedy repose. I, too, served an apprenticeship in my youth to your trade of blood."

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"Your watchfulness and experience have then detected the signs of preparation in the garrison? Have they also discovered the objects and probable consequences of the enterprise?"

"Both; Gage weakly thinks to crush the germ of liberty, which has already quickened in the land, by lopping its feeble branches, when it is rooted in the hearts of the people. He thinks that bold thoughts can be humbled by the destruction of magazines."

"It is then only a measure of precaution that he is about to take?"

The old man shook his head mournfully as he answered—

"It will prove a measure of blood."

"I intend to accompany the detachment into the country," said Lionel—"it will probably take post at some little distance in the interior, and it will afford me a fitting opportunity to make those inquiries which you know are so near my heart, and in which you have promised to assist—it is to consult on the means, that I have now sought you."

The countenance of the stranger seemed to lose its character of melancholy reflection, as Lionel spoke, and his eyes moved, vacant and unmeaning, over the naked rafters above him, passing in their wanderings across the surface of the unheeded map again, until they fell full upon the face of the astonished youth, where they remained settled for more than a minute, fixed in the glazed, riveted look of death. The lips of Lionel had already opened in anxious inquiry, when the expression of life shot again into the features of Ralph, with the suddenness, and with an appearance of the physical reality with which light flashes from the sun when emerging from a cloud.

"You are ill!" Lionel exclaimed.

"Leave me," said the old man, "leave me."

"Surely not at such a moment, and alone."

"I bid you leave me—we shall meet, as you desire, in the country."

"You would then have me accompany the troops and expect your coming?"

"Both."

"Pardon me," said Lionel, dropping his eyes in embarrassment, and speaking with hesitation, "but your present abode, and the appearance of your attire, is an evidence that old age has come upon you when you are not altogether prepared to meet its sufferings."

"You would offer me money?"

"By accepting it, I shall become the obliged party."

"When my wants exceed my means, young man, your offer shall be remembered. Go, now; there is no time for delay."

"But I would not leave you alone; the woman, the termagant, is better than none!"

"She is absent."

"And the boy—the changeling has the feelings of humanity, and would aid you in an extremity."

"He is better employed than in propping the steps of a useless old man.—Go, then, I entreat—I command, sir, that you leave me."

The firm, if not haughty manner, in which the other repeated his desire, taught Lionel that he had nothing more to expect at present, and he obeyed reluctantly, by slowly leaving the apartment; and as soon as he had descended the ladder, he began to retrace his steps toward his own quarters. In crossing the light drawbridge thrown over the narrow dock, already mentioned, his contemplations were first disturbed by the sounds of voices, at no great distance, apparently conversing in tones that were not intended to be heard by every ear. It was a moment when each unusual incident was likely to induce inquiry, and Lionel stopped to examine two men, who, at a little distance, held their secret and suppressed communications. He had, however, paused but an instant, when the whisperers separated; one walking leisurely up the centre of the square, entering under one of the arches of the market-place, and the other coming directly across the bridge on which he himself was standing.

"What, Job, do I find you here, whispering and plotting in the Dock Square?" exclaimed Lionel; "what secrets can you have, that require the cover of night?"

"Job lives there, in the old ware'us'," said the lad sullenly—"Nab has plenty of house-room, now the king won't let the people bring in their goods."

"But whither are you going? into the water? surely the road to your bed cannot be through the town-dock."

"Nab wants fish to eat, as well as a ruff to keep off the rain," said Job, dropping

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lightly from the bridge into a small canoe, which was fastened to one of its posts, "and now the king has closed the harbor, the fish have to come up in the dark; for come they will; Boston fish an't to be shut out by acts of Parliament!"

"Poor lad!" exclaimed Lionel, "return to your home and your bed; here is money to buy food for your mother, if she suffers—you will draw a shot from some of the sentinels by going about the harbor thus at night."

"Job can see a ship farther than a ship can see Job," returned the other; "and if they should kill Job, they needn't think to shoot a Boston boy without some stir."

Further dialogue was precluded; the canoe gliding along the outer dock into the harbor, with a stillness and swiftness that showed the idiot was not ignorant of the business which he had undertaken. Lionel resumed his walk, and was passing the head of the square, when he encountered, face to face, under the light of a lamp, the man whose figure he had seen but a minute before to issue from beneath the town-hall. A mutual desire to ascertain the identity of each other drew them together.

"We meet again, Major Lincoln!" said the interesting stranger Lionel remembered to have seen at the political meeting. "Our interviews appear ordained to occur in secret places."

"And Job Pray would seem to be the presiding spirit," returned the young soldier. "You parted from him but now?"

"I trust, sir," said the stranger gravely, "that this is not a land, nor have we fallen on times, when and where an honest man dare not say that he has spoken to whom he pleases."

"Certainly, sir, it is not for me to prohibit the intercourse," returned Lionel. "You spoke of our fathers; mine is well known to you, it would seem, though to me you are a stranger."

"And may be so yet a little longer," said the other, "though I think the time is at hand when men will be known in their true characters; until then, Major Lincoln, I bid you adieu."

Without waiting for any reply, the stranger took a different direction from that which Lionel was pursuing, and walked away with the swiftness of one who was pressed with urgent business. Lionel soon ascended into the upper part of the town, with the intention of going into Tremont Street, to communicate his design to accompany the expedition. It was now apparent to the young man, that a rumor of the contemplated movement of the troops was spreading secretly, but swiftly, among the people. He passed several groups of earnest and excited townsmen, conferring together at the corners of the streets, from some of whom he overheard the startling intelligence that the neck, the only approach to the place by land, was closed by a line of sentinels; and that guard-boats from the vessels of war were encircling the peninsula in a manner to intercept the communication with the adjacent country. Still no indications of a military alarm could be discovered, though, at times, a stifled hum, like the notes of busy preparation, was borne along by the damp breezes of the night, and mingled with those sounds of a spring evening, which increased as he approached the skirts of the dwellings. In Tremont Street Lionel found no appearance of that excitement, which was spreading so rapidly in the old and lower parts of the town. He passed into his own room without meeting any of the family, and having completed his brief arrangements, he was descending to inquire for his kinswomen, when the voice of Mrs. Lechmere, proceeding from a small apartment, appropriated to her own use, arrested his steps. Anxious to take leave in person, he approached the half-open door, and would have asked permission to enter, had not his eye rested on the person of Abigail Pray, who was in earnest conference with the mistress of the mansion.

"A man aged, and poor, say you?" observed Mrs. Lechmere, at that instant.

"And one that seems to know all," interrupted Abigail, glancing her eyes about with the expression of superstitious terror.

"All!" echoed Mrs. Lechmere, her lip trembling more with apprehension than age; "and he arrived with Major Lincoln, say you?"

"In the same ship; and it seems that heaven has ordained that he shall dwell with me in my poverty, as a punishment for my great sins!"

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"But why do you tolerate his presence, if it be irksome," said Mrs. Lechmere; "you are at least the mistress of your own dwelling."

"It has pleased God that my home shall be the home of any who are so miserable as to need one. He has the same right to live in the warehouse that I have."

"You have the rights of a woman, and of first possession," said Mrs. Lechmere, with that unyielding severity of manner, that Lionel had often observed before; "I would turn him into the street, like a dog."

"Into the street!" repeated Abigail, again looking about her in secret terror; "speak lower, Madam Lechmere, for the love of heaven—I dare not even look at him—he reminds me of all I have ever known, and of all the evil I have ever done, by his scorching eye—and yet I cannot tell why—and then Job worships him as a god, and if I should offend him, he could easily worm from the child all that you and I wish so much——"

"How!" exclaimed Mrs. Lechmere, in a voice husky with horror, "have you been so base as to make a confidant of that fool?"

"That fool is the child of my bosom," said Abigail, raising her hands, as if imploring pardon for the indiscretion.—"Ah! Madam Lechmere, you, who are rich, and great, and happy, and have such a sweet and sensible grandchild, cannot know how to love one like Job; but when the heart is loaded and heavy, it throws its burden on any that will bear it; and Job is my child, though he is but little better than an idiot!"

It was by no trifling exertion of his breeding that Lionel was enabled to profit by the inability of Mrs. Lechmere to reply, and to turn away from the spot, and cease to listen to a conversation that was not intended for his ear. He reached the parlor, and threw himself on one of its settees, before he was conscious that he was no longer alone or unobserved.

"What! Major Lincoln returned from his revels thus early, and armed like a bandit, to his teeth!" exclaimed the playful voice of Cecil Dynevor, who, unheeded, was in possession of the opposite seat, when he entered the room.

Lionel started, and rubbed his forehead, like a man awaking from a dream, as he answered—

"Yes, a bandit, or any other opprobrious name you please; I deserve them all."

"Surely," said Cecil, turning pale, "none other dare use such language of Major Lincoln, and he does it unjustly!"

"What foolish nonsense have I uttered, Miss Dynevor?" cried Lionel, recovering his recollection; "I was lost in thought, and heard your language without comprehending its meaning."

"Still you are armed; a sword is not a usual instrument at your side, and now you bear even pistols!"

"Yes," returned the young soldier, laying aside his dangerous implements; "yes, I am about to march as a volunteer, with a party that go into the country to-night, and I take these because I would affect something very warlike, though you well know how peaceably I am disposed."

"March into the country—and in the dead of night!" said Cecil, catching her breath, and turning pale—"and does Lionel Lincoln volunteer on such a duty?"

"I volunteer to perform no other duty than to be a witness of whatever may occur—you are not more ignorant yourself of the nature of the expedition than I am at this moment."

"Then remain where you are," said Cecil firmly, "and enlist not in an enterprise that may be unholy in its purposes and disgraceful in its results."

"Of the former I am innocent, whatever they may be, nor will they be affected by my presence or absence. There is little danger of disgrace in accompanying the grenadiers and light-infantry of this army, Miss Dynevor, though it should be against treble their numbers of chosen troops."

"Then it would seem," said Agnes Danforth, speaking as she entered the room, "that our friend Mercury, that feather of a man, Captain Polwarth, is to be one of these night depredators! heaven shield the henroosts!"

"You have then heard the intelligence, Agnes?"

"I have heard that men are arming, and that boats are rowing round the town in all directions, and that it is forbidden to enter or quit Boston, as we were wont to do, Cecil, at such hours and in such fashion as suited

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us plain Americans," said Agnes, endeavoring to conceal her deep vexation in affected irony—"God only can tell in what all these oppressive measures will end."

"If you go only as a curious spectator of the depredations of the troops," continued Cecil, "are you not wrong to lend them even the sanction of your name?"

"I have yet to learn that there will be depredations."

"You forget, Cecil," interrupted Agnes Danforth, scornfully, "that Major Lincoln did not arrive until after the renowned march from Roxbury to Dorchester! Then the troops gathered their laurels under the face of the sun; but it is easy to conceive how much more glorious their achievements will become when darkness shall conceal their blushes!"

The blood rushed across the fine features of Lionel, but he laughed as he arose to depart, saying—

"You compel me to beat the retreat, my spirited coz. If I have my usual fortune in this forage, your larder, however, shall be the better for it. I kiss my hand to you, for it would be necessary to lay aside the scarlet, to dare to approach with a more peaceable offering. But here I may make an approach to something like amity."

He took the hand of Cecil, who frankly met his offer, and insensibly suffered herself to be led to the door of the building while he continued speaking.

"I would, Lincoln, that you were not to go," she said, when they stopped on the threshold—"it is not required of you as a soldier; and as a man your own feelings should teach you to be tender of your countrymen."

"It is as a man that I go, Cecil," he answered; "I have motives that you cannot suspect."

"And is your absence to be long?"

"If not for days, my object will be unaccomplished;" but he added, pressing her hand gently, "you cannot doubt my willingness to return when occasion may offer."

"Go, then," said Cecil, hastily, and perhaps unconsciously extricating herself—"go, if you have secret reasons for your conduct; but remember that the acts of every officer of your rank are keenly noted."

"Do you then distrust me, Cecil?"

"No—no—I distrust no one, Major Lincoln—go—go—and—and—we shall see you, Lionel, the instant you return."

He had not time to reply, for she glided into the building so rapidly as to give the young man an opportunity only to observe, that, instead of rejoining her cousin, her light form passed up the great stairs with the swiftness and grace of a fairy.

CHAPTER IX.

"Hang out our banners on the outward walls;
The cry is still, *They come!*"—*Macbeth.*

LIONEL had walked from the dwelling of Mrs. Lechmere to the foot of Beacon-Hill, and had even toiled up some part of the steep ascent, before he recollected why he was thus wandering by himself at that unusual hour. Hearing, however, no sounds that denoted an immediate movement of the troops, he then yielded, unconsciously, to the nature of his sensations, which just at that moment rendered his feelings jealous of communication with others, and continued to ascend until he gained the summit of the eminence. From this elevated stand he paused to contemplate the scene which lay in the obscurity of the night at his feet, while his thoughts returned from the flattering anticipations in which he had been indulging, to consider the more pressing business of the hour. There arose from the town itself a distant buzzing, like the hum of suppressed agitation, and lights were seen to glide along the streets, or flit across the windows, in a manner which denoted that a knowledge of the expedition had become general within its dwellings. Lionel turned his head toward the common, and listened long and anxiously, but in vain, to detect a single sound that could betray any unusual stir among the soldiery. Toward the interior, the darkness of night had fallen heavily, dimming the amphitheatre of hills that encircled the place, and enshrouding the vales and lowlands between them and the water with an impenetrable veil of gloom. There were moments, indeed, when he imagined he overheard some indications among the people of the opposite shore, that they

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were apprised of the impending descent; but on listening more attentively, the utmost of which his ear could assure him was the faint lowing of cattle from the meadows, or the plash of oars from a line of boats, which, by stretching far along the shores, told both the nature and the extent of the watchfulness that was deemed necessary for the occasion.

While Lionel stood thus, on the margin of the little platform of earth, that had been formed by levelling the apex of the natural cone, musing on the probable results of the measure his superiors had been resolving to undertake, a dim light shed itself along the grass, and glancing upward, danced upon the beacon with strong and playful rays.

"Scoundrel!" exclaimed a man, springing from his place of concealment at the foot of the post, and encountering him face to face, "do you dare to fire the beacon?"

"I would answer, by asking how you dare to apply so rude an epithet to me, did I not see the cause of your error," said Lionel. "The light is from yonder moon, which is just emerging from the ocean."

"Ah! I see my error," returned his rough assailant.—"By heavens, I would have sworn at first, 'twas the beacon."

"You must then believe in the traditional witchcraft of this country; for nothing short of necromancy could have enabled me to light those combustibles at this distance."

"I don't know; 'tis a strange people we have got amongst—they stole the cannon from the gun-house here, a short time since, when I would have said the thing was impossible. It was before your arrival, sir; for I now believe I address myself to Major Lincoln, of the 47th."

"You are nearer the truth, this time, than in your first conjecture as to my character," said Lionel; "but have I met one of the gentlemen of our mess?"

The stranger now explained that he was a subaltern in a different regiment, but that he well knew the person of the other. He added that he had been ordered to watch on the hill to prevent any of the inhabitants lighting the beacon, or making any other signal which might convey into the country a knowledge of the contemplated inroad.

"This matter wears a more serious aspect than I had supposed," returned Lionel, when the young man had ended his apologies and explanation; "the commander-in-chief must intend more than we are aware of, by employing officers in this manner, to do the duties of privates."

"We poor subs know but little, and care less what he means," cried the ensign; "though I will acknowledge, that I can see no sufficient reason why British troops should put on coats of darkness to march against a parcel of guessing, canting countrymen, who would run at the sight of their uniforms under a bright sun. Had I my will, the tar above us, there, should blaze a mile high, to bring down the heroes from the Connecticut river; the dogs would cow before two full companies of the grenadiers—ha! listen, sir; there they go, now, the pride of our army! I know them by their heavy tread."

Lionel did listen attentively, and plainly distinguished the measured step of a body of disciplined men, moving rapidly across the common, as if marching toward the water-side. Hastily bidding his companion good-night, he threw himself over the brow of the hill, and taking the direction of the sounds, he arrived at the shore at the same instant with the troops. Two dark masses of human bodies were halted in order, and as Lionel skirted the columns, his experienced eye judged that the force collected before him could be but little short of a thousand men. A group of officers was clustered on the beach, and he approached it, rightly supposing that it was gathered about the leader of the party. This officer proved to be the lieutenant-colonel of the 10th, who was in close conversation with the old major of marines, alluded to by the sentinel who stood before the gates of Province-House. To the former of these the young soldier addressed himself, demanding leave to accompany the detachment as a volunteer. After a few words of explanation, his request was granted, though each forbore to touch in the slightest manner on the secret objects of the expedition.

Lionel now found his groom, who had followed the troops with his master's horses, and, after giving his orders to the man, he proceeded in quest of his friend Polwarth, whom he soon discovered, posted in all the

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stiffness of military exactness, at the head of the leading platoon of the column of light-infantry. As it was apparent, both from the position they occupied, as well as by the boats that had been collected at the point, that the detachment was not to leave the peninsula by its ordinary channel of communication with the country, there remained no alternative but to await patiently the order to embark. The delay was but short, and, as the most perfect order was observed, the troops were soon seated, and the boats pulled heavily from the land, just as the rays of the moon, which had been some time playing among the hills, and gilding the spires of the town, diffused themselves softly over the bay, and lighted the busy scene, with an effect not unlike the sudden rising of the curtain at the opening of some interesting drama. Polwarth had established himself by the side of Lionel, much to the ease of his limbs, and as they moved slowly into the light, all those misgivings which had so naturally accompanied his musings on the difficulties of a partisan irruption, vanished before the loveliness of the time, and possibly before the quietude of the action.

"There are moments when I could fancy the life of a sailor," he said, leaning indolently back, and playing with one hand in the water. "This pulling about in boats is easy work, and must be capital assistance for a heavy digestion, inasmuch as it furnishes air with as little violent exercise as may be. Your marine should lead a merry life of it!"

"They are said to murmur at the clashing of their duties with those of the sea-officers," said Lionel; "and I have often heard them complain of a want of room to make use of their legs."

"Humph!" ejaculated Polwarth; "the leg is a part of a man for which I see less actual necessity than for any other portion of his frame. I often think there has been a sad mistake in the formation of the animal; as, for instance, one can be a very good waterman, as you see, without legs—a good fiddler, a first-rate tailor, a lawyer, a doctor, a parson, a very tolerable cook, and in short, anything but a dancing-master. I see no use in a leg unless it be to have the gout—at any rate, a leg of twelve inches is as good as one a mile long, and the saving might be appropriated to the nobler parts of the animal; such as the brain and the stomach."

"You forget the officer of light-infantry," said Lionel, laughing.

"You might give him a couple of inches more; though, as everything in this wicked world is excellent only by comparison, it would amount to the same thing, and on my system a man would be just as fit for the light-infantry without, as with legs; and he would get rid of a good deal of troublesome manœuvring, especially of this new exercise. It would then become a delightful service, Leo; for it may be said to monopolize all the poetry of military life, as you may see. Neither the imagination nor the body can require more than we enjoy at this moment, and of what use, I would ask, are our legs? if anything, they are incumbrances in this boat. Here we have a soft moon, and softer seats—smooth water, and a stimulating air—on one side a fine country, which, though but faintly seen, is known to be fertile and rich to abundance; and on the other a picturesque town, stored with the condiments of every climate—even those rascally privates look mellowed by the moon-beams, with their scarlet coats and glittering arms! Did you meet Miss Danforth in your visit to Tremont Street, Major Lincoln?"

"That pleasure was not denied me."

"Knew she of these martial proceedings?"

"There was something exceedingly belligerent in her humor."

"Spoke she of the light-infantry, or of any who serve in the light corps?"

"Your name was certainly mentioned," returned Lionel, a little dryly—"she intimated that the hen-roosts were in danger."

"Ah! she is a girl of a million! her very acids are sweet! the spices were not forgotten when the dough of her composition was mixed; would that she were here—five minutes of moonshine to a man in love is worth a whole summer of a broiling sun—'twould be a masterstroke to entice her into one of our picturesque marches; your partisan is the man to take everything by surprise—women and fortifications! Where now are your companies of the lines; your artillery and dragoons; your engineers and staff! night-capped and snoring to a man, while we

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enjoy here the very desert of existence—I wish I could hear a nightingale!"

"You have a solitary whip-poor-will whistling his notes, as if in lamentation at our approach."

"Too dolorous, and by far too monotonous; 'tis like eating pig for a month. But why are our fifes asleep?"

"The precautions of a whole day should hardly be defeated by the tell-tale notes of our music," said Lionel; "your spirits get the better of your discretion. I should think the prospect of a fatiguing march would have lowered your vein."

"A fico for fatigue!" exclaimed Polwarth —"we only go out to take a position at the colleges to cover our supplies—we are for school, Leo—only fancy the knapsacks of the men to be satchels,—humor my folly,—and you may believe yourself once more a boy."

The spirits of Polwarth had indeed undergone a sudden change, when he found the sad anticipations which crossed his mind on first hearing of a night inroad, so agreeably disappointed by the comfortable situation he occupied; and he continued conversing in the manner described, until the boats reached an unfrequented point that projected a little way into that part of the bay, which washed the western side of the peninsula of Boston. Here the troops landed, and were again formed with all possible despatch. The company of Polwarth was posted, as before, at the head of the column of light-infantry; and an officer of the staff riding a short distance in front, it was directed to follow his movements. Lionel ordered his groom to take the route of the troops with the horses, and placing himself once more by the side of the captain, they proceeded at the appointed signal.

"Now for the shades of old Harvard!" said Polwarth, pointing toward the humble buildings of the university; "you shall feast this night on reason, while I will make a more sub—ha! what can that blind quartermaster mean by taking this direction! Does he not see that the meadows are half covered with water!"

"Move on, move on with the light-infantry," cried the stern voice of the old major of marines, who rode but a short distance in their rear, "Do you falter at the sight of water!"

"We are not wharf-rats," said Polwarth.

Lionel seized him by the arm, and before the disconcerted captain had time to recollect himself, he was borne through a wide pool of stagnant water, mid-leg deep.

"Do not let your romance cost your commission," said the major, as Polwarth floundered out of his difficulties; "here is an incident at once for your private narrative of the campaign."

"Ah! Leo," said the captain, with a sort of comical sorrow, "I fear we are not to court the muses by this hallowed moon to-night!"

"You can assure yourself of that, by observing that we leave the academical roofs on our left—our leaders take the highway."

They had by this time extricated themselves from the meadows, and were moving on a road which led into the interior.

"You had better order up your groom, and mount, Major Lincoln," said Polwarth, sullenly; "a man need husband his strength, I see."

"'Twould be folly now; I am wet, and must walk for safety."

With the departure of Polwarth's spirits the conversation began to flag, and the gentlemen continued their march with only such occasional communications as arose from the passing incidents of their situation. It very soon became apparent, both by the direction given to the columns, as well as by the hurried steps of their guide, that the march was to be forced, as well as of some length. But as the air was getting cool, even Polwarth was not reluctant to warm his chilled blood by more than ordinary exertion. The columns opened for the sake of ease, and each man was permitted to consult his own convenience, provided he preserved his appointed situation, and kept even pace with his comrades. In this manner the detachment advanced swiftly, a general silence pervading the whole, as the spirits of the men settled into that deep sobriety which denotes much earnestness of purpose. At first, the whole country appeared buried in a general sleep; but as they proceeded, the barking of the dogs, and the tread of the soldiery, drew the inhabitants of the farm-houses to their win-

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dows, who gazed in mute wonder at the passing spectacle, across which the mellow light of the moon cast a glow of brilliancy. Lionel had turned his head from studying the surprise depicted in the faces of the members of one of these disturbed families, when the deep tones of a distant church-bell came sweeping down the valley in which they marched, ringing peal on peal, in the quick, spirit-stirring sounds of an alarm. The men raised their heads in wonderful attention, as they advanced; but it was not long before the reports of fire-arms were heard echoing among the hills, and bell began to answer bell in every direction, until the sounds blended with the murmurs of the night air, or were lost in distance. The whole country was now filled with every organ of sound that the means of the people furnished, or their ingenuity could devise, to call the population to arms. Fires blazed along the heights, the bellowing of the conchs and horns mingled with the rattling of the muskets and the varied tones of the bells, while the swift clattering of horses' hoofs began to be heard, as if their riders were dashing furiously along the flanks of the party.

"Push on, gentlemen, push on," shouted the old veteran of marines, amid the dim. "The Yankees have awoke, and are stirring—we have yet a long road to journey—push on, light-infantry, the grenadiers are on your heels!"

The advance quickened their steps, and the whole body pushed for their unknown object with as much rapidity as the steadiness of military array would admit. In this manner the detachment continued to proceed for some hours, without halting, and Lionel imagined that they had advanced several leagues into the country. The sounds of the alarm had now passed away, having swept far inland, until the faintest evidence of its existence was lost to the ear, though the noise of horsemen, riding furiously along the by-ways, yet denoted that men were still hurrying past them, to the scene of the expected strife. As the deceitful light of the moon was blending with the truer colors of the day, the welcome sound of "Halt!" was passed from the rear up to the head of the column of light-infantry.

"Halt!" repeated Polwarth, with instinctive readiness, and with a voice that sent the order through the whole length of the extended line; "halt, and let the rear close. If my judgment in walking be worth so much as an anchovy, they are some miles behind us by this time! A man needs to have crossed his race with the blood of Flying Childers for this sort of work! The next command should be to break our fasts—Tom, you brought the trifles I sent you from Major Lincoln's quarters?"

"Yes, sir," returned his man; "they are on the major's horses, in the rear, as——"

"The major's horses in the rear, you ass, when food is in such request in the front! I wonder, Leo, if a mouthful couldn't be picked up in yon farm-house?"

"Pick yourself off that stone, and make the men dress; here is Pitcairn closing to the front with the whole battalion."

Lionel had hardly spoken before an order was passed to the light-infantry to look to their arms, and for the grenadiers to prime and load. The presence of the veteran who rode in front of the column, and the hurry of the moment, suppressed the complaints of Polwarth, who was in truth an excellent officer, as it respected what he himself termed the "quiescent details of service." Three or four companies of the light-corps were detached from the main body, and formed in the open marching order of their exercise, when the old marine, placing himself at their head, gave forth the order to advance again at a quick step. The road now led into a vale, and at some distance a small hamlet of houses was dimly seen through the morning haze, clustered around one of the humble, but decent temples, so common in Massachusetts. The halt, and the brief preparations that succeeded, had excited a powerful interest in the whole of the detachment, who pushed earnestly forward, keeping on the heels of the charger of their veteran leader, as he passed over the ground at a small trot. The air partook of the scent of morning, and the eye was enabled to dwell distinctly on surrounding objects, quickening, aided by the excitement of the action, the blood of the men who had been toiling throughout the night in uncertain obscurity along an unknown, and, apparently, interminable road. Their object now seemed before them and

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attainable, and they pressed forward to achieve it in animated but silent earnestness. The plain architecture of the church and of its humble companions had just become distinct, when three or four armed horsemen were seen attempting to anticipate their arrival, by crossing the head of the column from a by-path.

"Come in," cried an officer of the staff in front, "come in, or quit the place."

The men turned and rode briskly off, one of their party flashing his piece in a vain attempt to give the alarm. A low mandate was now passed through the ranks to push on, and in a few moments they entered on a full view of the hamlet, the church, and the little green on which it stood. The forms of men were seen moving swiftly across the latter, as a roll of a drum broke from the spot; and there were glimpses of a small body of countrymen, drawn up in the affectation of military parade.

"Push on, light-infantry!" cried their leader, spurring his horse, and advancing with the staff at so brisk a trot, as to disappear round an angle of the church.

Lionel pressed forward with a beating heart, for a crowd of horrors rushed across his imagination at the moment, when the stern voice of the major of marines was again heard shouting—

"Disperse, ye rebels, disperse!—throw down your arms and disperse!"

These memorable words were instantly followed by the reports of pistols, and the fatal mandate of "Fire!" when a loud shout arose from the whole body of the soldiery, who rushed upon the open green, and threw in a close discharge on all before them.

"Great God!" exclaimed Lionel, "what is it ye do? ye fire at unoffending men! is there no law but force? beat up their pieces, Polwarth—stop their fire."

"Halt!" cried Polwarth, brandishing his sword fiercely among his men, "come to an order, or I'll fell ye to the earth."

But the excitement which had been gathering to a head for so many hours, and the animosity which had so long been growing between the troops and the people, were not to be repressed at a word. It was only when Pitcairn himself rode in among the soldiers, and, aided by his officers, beat down their arms, that the uproar was gradually quelled, and something like order was again restored. Before this was effected, however, a few scattering shot were thrown back from their flying adversaries, though without material injury to the British.

When the firing had ceased, officers and men stood gazing at each other for a few moments, as if even they could forsee some of the mighty events which were to follow the deeds of that hour. The smoke slowly arose, like a lifted veil, from the green, and, mingling with the fogs of morning, drove heavily across the country, as if to communicate the fatal intelligence that the final appeal to arms had been made. Every eye was bent inquiringly on the fatal green, and Lionel beheld, with a feeling allied to anguish, a few men at a distance, writhing and struggling in their wounds, while some five or six bodies lay stretched upon the grass in the appalling quiet of death. Sickening at the sight, he turned, and walked away by himself, while the remainder of the troops, alarmed by the reports of the arms, were eagerly pressing up from the rear to join their comrades. Unwittingly he approached the church, nor did he awake from the deep abstraction into which he had fallen, until he was aroused by the extraordinary spectacle of Job Pray, issuing from the edifice with an air in which menace was singularly blended with resentment and fear. The changeling pointed earnestly to the body of a man, who, having been wounded, had crept for refuge near to the door of the temple, in which he had so often worshipped that Being to whom he had been thus hurriedly sent to render his last and great account, and said solemnly—

"You have killed one of God's creatures; and he'll remember it!"

"I would it were one only," said Lionel; "but they are many, and none can tell where the carnage is to cease."

"Do you think," said Job, looking furtively around to assure himself that no other overhead him, "that the King can kill men in the Bay colony as he can in London? They'll take this up in old Funnel and 'twill ring again, from the North End to the Neck."

"What can they do, boy, after all," said Lionel, forgetting at the moment that he

whom he addressed had been denied the reason of his kind—"the power of Britain is too mighty for these scattered and unprepared colonies to cope with, and prudence would tell the people to desist from resistance while yet they may."

"Does the king believe there is more prudence in London than there is in Boston?" returned the simpleton; "he needn't think, because the people were quiet at the massacre, there'll be no stir about this—you have have killed one of God's creatures," added the lad, "and he'll remember it!"

"How came you here, sirrah?" demanded Lionel, suddenly recollecting himself; "did you not tell me that you were going out to fish for your mother?"

"And if I did," returned the other, sullenly, "an't there fish in the ponds as well as in the bay, and can't Nab have a fresh taste?—Job don't know there is any act of Parliament ag'n taking brook trout."

"Fellow, you are attempting to deceive me! Some one is practising on your ignorance, and, knowing you to be a fool, is employing you on errands that may one day cost your life."

"The king can't send Job on a'r'ands," said the lad, proudly; "for there is no law for it, and Job won't go."

"Your knowledge will undo you, simpleton—who should teach you these niceties of the law?"

"Why, do you think the Boston people so dumb as not to know the law?" asked Job, with unfeigned astonishment—"and Ralph, too—he knows as much law as the king—he told me it was ag'in all law to shoot at the minutemen unless they fired first, because the colony has a right to train whenever it pleases."

"Ralph!" said Lionel, eagerly—"can Ralph be with you, then! 'tis impossible; I left him ill, and at home—neither would he mingle in such a business as this, at his years."

"I expect Ralph has seen bigger armies than the light-infantry, and grannies, and all the soldiers left in town put together," said Job, evasively.

Lionel was far too generous to practise on on the simplicity of his companion, with a view to extract any secret which might endanger his liberty, but he felt a deep concern in the welfare of a young man who had been thrown in his way in the manner already related. He therefore pursued the subject, with the double design to advise Job against any dangerous connections, and to relieve his own anxiety on the subject of the aged stranger. But to all his interrogatories the lad answered guardedly, and with a discretion which denoted that he possessed no small share of cunning, though a higher order of intellect had been denied him.

"I repeat to you," said Lionel, losing his patience, "that it is important for me to meet the man you call Ralph in the country, and I wish to know if he is to be seen near here."

"Ralph scorns a lie," returned Job—"go where he promised to meet you, and see if he don't come."

"But no place was named—and this unhappy event may embarrass him, or frighten him——"

"Frighten him!" repeated Job, shaking his head with solemn earnestness; "you can't frighten Ralph!"

"His daring may prove his misfortune. Boy, I ask you for the last time whether the old man——"

Perceiving Job to shrink back timidly, and lower in his looks, Lionel paused, and casting a glance behind him, beheld the captain of grenadiers standing with folded arms, silently contemplating the body of the American.

"Will you have the goodness to explain to me, Major Lincoln," said the captain, when he perceived himself observed, "why this man lies here dead?"

"You see the wound in his breast?"

"It is a palpable and baistly truth, that he has been shot—but why, or with what design?"

"I must leave that question to be answered by our superiors, Captain M'Fuse," returned Lionel. "It is, however, rumored that the expedition is out to seize certain magazines of provisions and arms, which the colonists have been collecting, it is feared, with hostile intentions."

"I had my own sagacious thoughts that we were bent on some such glorious errand!" said M'Fuse, with strong contempt expressed

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in his hard features. "Tell me, Major Lincoln—you are certainly but a young soldier, though, being of the staff, you should know —does Gage think we can have a war with the arms and ammunition all on one side? We have had a long p'ace, Major Lincoln, and now, when there is a small prospect of some of the peculiarities of our profession arising, we are commanded to do the very thing which is most likely to def'ate the object of war."

"I do not know that I rightly understand you, sir," said Lionel; "there can be but little glory gained by such troops as we possess, in a contest with the unarmed and undisciplined inhabitants of any country."

"Exactly my maining, sir; it is quite obvious that we understand each other thoroughly, without a world of circumlocution. The lads are doing very well at present, and if left to themselves a few months longer, it may become a creditable affair. You know, as well as I do, Major Lincoln, that time is necessary to make a soldier, and if they are hurried into the business, you might as well be chasing a mob up Ludgate Hill, for the honor you will gain. A discrate officer would nurse this little matter, instead of resorting to such precipitation. To my id'a'a's, sir, the man before us has been butchered, and not slain in honorable battle!"

"There is much reason to fear that others may use the same term in speaking of the affair," returned Lionel; "God knows how much cause we may have to lament the death of the poor man!"

"On that topic, the man may be said to have gone through a business that was to be done, and is not to be done over again," said the captain, very coolly, "and therefore his death can be no very great calamity to himself, whatever it may be to us. If these minute-men—and, as they stand but a minute, they 'arn their name like worthy fellows —if these minute-men, sir, stood in your way, you should have whipped them from the green with your ramrods."

"Here is one who may tell you that they are not to be treated like children either," said Lionel, turning to the place which had been so recently occupied by Job Pray, but which, to his surprise, he now found vacant. While he was yet looking around him, wondering whither the lad could so suddenly have withdrawn, the drums beat the signal to form, and a general bustle among the soldiery showed them to be on the eve of further movements. The two gentlemen instantly rejoined their companions, walking thoughtfully towards the troops, though influenced by such totally different views of the recent transactions.

During the short halt of the advance, the whole detachment was again united, and a hasty meal had been taken. The astonishment which succeeded the rencontre, had given place, among the officers, to a military pride, capable of sustaining them in much more arduous circumstances. Even the ardent looks of professional excitement were to be seen in most of their countenances, as with glittering arms, waving banners, and timing their march to the enlivening music of their band, they wheeled frem the fatal spot, and advanced again, with proud and measured steps, along the highway. If such was the result of the first encounter on the lofty and tempered spirits of the gentlemen of the detachment, its effect on the common hirelings in the ranks was still more palpable and revolting. Their coarse jests, and taunting looks, as they moved by the despised victims of their disciplined skill, together with the fierce and boastful expression of brutal triumph, which so many among them betrayed, exhibited the infallible evidence, that, having tasted of blood, they were now ready, like tigers, to feed on it till they were glutted.

CHAPTER X.

"There was mounting 'mong Græmes of the Netherby clan;
Fosters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they ran;
There was racing, and chasing, on Cannobie Lea."
—*Marmion.*

THE pomp of military parade, with which the troops marched from the village of Lexington, as the little hamlet was called, where the foregoing events occurred, soon settled again into the sober and business-like air of men earnestly bent on the achievement of their object. It was no longer a secret that they were to proceed two leagues further into

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the interior, to destroy the stores already mentioned, and which were now known to be collected at Concord, the town where the Congress of Provincial Delegates, who were substituted by the colonists for the ancient legislatures of the province, held their meetings. As the march could not now be concealed, it became necessary to resort to expedition, in order to insure its successful termination. The veteran officer of marines, so often mentioned, resumed his post in front, and at the head of the same companies of the light corps, which he had before led, pushed in advance of the heavier column of the grenadiers. Polwarth, by this arrangement, perceived himself again included among those on whose swiftness of foot so much depended. When Lionel rejoined his friend, he found him at the head of his men, marching with so grave an air as at once induced the major to give him credit for regrets much more commendable than such as were connected with his physical distress. The files were once more opened for room, as well as for air, which was becoming necessary, as a hot sun began to dissipate the mists of the morning, and shed that enervating influence on the men, so peculiar to the first warmth of an American spring.

"This has been a hasty business altogether, Major Lincoln," said Polwarth, as Lionel took his wonted station at the side of the other, and dropped mechanically into the regular step of the party—"I know not that it is quite as lawful to knock a man in the head as a bullock."

"You then agree with me in thinking our attack hasty, if not cruel?"

"Hasty! most unequivocally. Haste may be called the distinctive property of the expedition; and whatever destroys the appetite of an honest man, may be set down as cruel. I have not been able to swallow a mouthful of breakfast, Leo. A man must have the cravings of a hyena, and the stomach of an ostrich, to eat and digest with such work as this of ours before his eyes."

"And yet the men regard their acts with triumph!"

"The dogs are drilled into it. But you saw how sober the Provincials looked in the matter; we must endeavor to soothe their feelings in the best manner we can."

"Will they not despise our consolation and apologies, and look rather to themselves for redress and vengeance?"

Polwarth smiled contemptuously, and there was an air of pride about him that gave an appearance of elasticity even to his heavy tread, as he answered—

"The thing is a bad thing, Major Lincoln, and, if you will, a wicked thing—but take the assurance of a man who knows the country well, there will be no attempts at vengeance; and as for redress, in a military way, the thing is impossible.

"I have dwelt two years, Major Lincoln, in the very heart of the country," said Polwarth, without turning his eyes from the steady gaze he maintained on the long road which lay before him, "even three hundred miles beyond the inhabited districts; and I should know the character of the nation, as well as its resources. In respect to the latter, there is no esculent thing within its borders, from a humming-bird to a buffalo, or from an artichoke to a watermelon, that I have not, on some occasion or other, had tossed up, in a certain way—therefore, I can speak with confidence, and do not hesitate to say, that the colonists will never fight; nor if they had the disposition, do they possess the means to maintain a war."

"Perhaps, sir," returned Lionel sharply, "you have consulted the animals of the country too closely to be acquainted with its spirits?"

"The relation between them is intimate—tell me what food a man diets on, and I will furnish you with his character. 'Tis morally impossible that a people who eat their pudding before the meats, after the fashion of these colonists, can ever make good soldiers, because the appetite is appeased before the introduction of the succulent nutriment of the flesh, into——"

"Enough! spare me the remainder," interrupted Lionel—"too much has been said already to prove the inferiority of the American to the European animal, and your reasoning is conclusive."

"Parliament must do something for the families of the sufferers."

"Parliament!" echoed Lionel, with bitter emphasis; "yes, we shall be called on to pass resolutions to commend the decision of

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the general, and the courage of the troops; and then, after we have added every possible insult to the injury, under the conviction our imaginary supremacy, we may hear of some paltry sum to the widows and orphans cited as an evidence of the unbounded generosity of the nation!"

"The feeding of six or seven broods of young Yankees is no such trifle, Major Lincoln," returned Polwarth; "and there I trust the unhappy affair will end. We are now marching on Concord, a place with a most auspicious name, where we shall find repose under its shadow, as well as the food of this home-made parliament, which they have gotten together. These considerations alone support me under the fatigue of this direful trot with which old Pitcairn goes over the ground—does the man think he is hunting with a pack of beagles at his heels?"

The opinion expressed by his companion, concerning the martial propensities of the Americans, was one too common among the troops to excite any surprise in Lionel; but, disgusted with the illiberality of the sentiment, and secretly offended at the supercilious manner with which the other expressed these injurious opinions of his countrymen, he continued his route in silence, while Polwarth speedily lost his loquacious propensity in a sense of the fatigue that assailed every muscle and joint in his body.

That severe training of the corps, concerning which the captain vented such frequent complaints, now stood the advance in good service. It was apparent that the whole country was in a state of high alarm, and small bodies of armed men were occasionally seen on the heights that flanked their route, though no attempts were made to revenge the deaths of those who fell at Lexington. The march of the troops was accelerated rather with a belief that the colonists might remove, or otherwise secret the stores, than from any apprehension that they would dare to oppose the progress of the chosen troops of the army. The slight resistance of the Americans in the rencontre of that morning, was already a jest among the soldiers, who sneeringly remarked that the term of "minute-men" was deservedly applied to warriors who had proved themselves so dexterous at flight. In short, every opprobrious and disrespectful epithet, that contempt and ignorance could invent, were freely lavished on the forbearing mildness of the suffering colonists. In this temper the troops reached a point whence the modest spire and roofs of Concord became visible. A small body of the colonists retired through the place as the English advanced, and the detachment entered the town without the least resistance, and with the appearance of conquerors. Lionel was not long in discovering from such of the inhabitants as remained, that, notwithstanding their approach had been known for some time, the events of that morning were yet a secret from the people of the village. Detachments from the light corps were immediately sent in various directions; some to search for the ammunition and provisions, and some to guard the approaches to the place. One, in particular, followed the retreating footsteps of the Americans, and took post at a bridge, at some little distance, which cut off the communication with the country to the northward.

In the meantime, the work of destruction was commenced in the town chiefly under the superintendence of the veteran officer of the marines. The few male inhabitants who remained in their dwellings, were of necessity peaceable, though Lionel could read, in their flushed cheeks and gleaming eyes, the secret indignation of men, who, accustomed to the protection of the law, now found themselves subjected to the insults and wanton abuses of a military inroad. Every door was flung open, and no place was held sacred from the rude scrutiny of the licentious soldiery. Taunts and execrations soon mingled with the seeming moderation with which the search had commenced, and loud exultation was betrayed, even among the officers, as the scanty provisions of the colonists were gradually brought to light. It was not a moment to respect private rights, and the freedom and ribaldry of the men were on the point of becoming something more serious, when the report of fire-arms was heard suddenly to issue from the post held by the light-infantry, at the bridge. A few scattering shot were succeeded by a volley, which was answered by another, with the quickness of lightning, and then the air became filled

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with the incessant rattling of a sharp conflict. Every arm was suspended, and each tongue became mute with astonishment, and the men abandoned their occupations as these unexpected sounds of war broke on their ears. The chiefs of the party were seen in consultation, and horsemen rode furiously into the place, to communicate the nature of this new conflict. The rank of Major Lincoln soon obtained for him a knowledge that it was thought impolitic to communicate to the whole detachment. Notwithstanding it was apparent that they who brought the intelligence were anxious to give it the most favorable aspect, he soon discovered that the same body of Americans, which had retired at their approach, having attempted to return to their homes in the town, had been fired on at the bridge, and in the skirmish which succeeded, the troops had been compelled to give way with loss. The effect of this prompt and spirited conduct on the part of the provincials produced a sudden alteration, not only in the aspect, but also in the proceedings of the troops. The detachments were recalled, and the drums beat to arms, and, for the first time, both officers and men seemed to recollect that they had six leagues to march through a country that hardly contained a friend. Still few or no enemies were visible, with the exception of those men of Concord, who had already drawn blood freely from the invaders of their domestic sanctuaries. The dead, and all the common wounded, were left were they had fallen, and it was thought an unfavorable omen among the observant of the detachment, that a wounded young subaltern, of rank and fortune, was also abandoned to the mercy of the exasperated Americans. The privates caught the infection from their officers, and Lionel saw, that in place of the high and insulting confidence, with which the troops had wheeled into the streets of Concord, that they left them, when the order was given to march, with faces bent anxiously on the surrounding heights, and with looks that bespoke a consciousness of the dangers that were likely to beset the long road which lay before them.

Their apprehensions were not groundless. The troops had hardly commenced their march before a volley was fired upon them from the protection of a barn, and as they advanced, volley succeeded volley, and musket answered musket from behind every cover that offered to their assailants. At first these desultory and feeble attacks were but little regarded; a brisk charge, and a smart fire of a few moments never failed to disperse their enemies, when the troops again proceeded for a short distance unmolested. But the alarm of the preceding night had gathered the people over an immense extent of country; and, having waited for information, those nearest to the scene of action were already pressing forward to the assistance of their friends. There was but little order, and no concert among the Americans; but each party, as it arrived, pushed into the fray, hanging on the skirts of their enemies, or making spirited, though ineffectual efforts to stop their progress. While the men from the towns behind them pressed upon their rear, the population in their front accumulated in bodies, like a rolling ball of snow, and before half the distance between Concord and Lexington was accomplished, Lionel perceived that the safety of their boasted power was in extreme jeopardy. During the first hour of these attacks, while they were yet distant, desultory and feeble, the young soldier had marched by the side of M'Fuse, who shook his head disdainfully whenever a shot whistled near him, and did not fail to comment freely on the folly of commencing a war thus prematurely, which, if properly nursed, might, to use his own words, "be in time brought to something pretty and interesting."

"You perceive, Major Lincoln," he added, "that these provincials have got the first elements of the art, for the rascals fire with exceeding accuracy, when the distance is considered; and six months or a year of close drilling would make them good for something in a regular charge. They have got a smart crack to their p'aces, and a pretty whiz to their lead already; if they could but learn to deliver their fire in platoons, the lads might make some impression on the light-infantry even now; and in a year or two, sir, they would not be unworthy of the favors of the grenadiers."

Lionel listened to this, and much other similar discourse, with a vacant ear; but as the combat thickened, the blood of the young

man began to course more swiftly through his veins; and at length, excited by the noise and the danger which was pressing more closely around them, he mounted, and, riding to the commander of the detachment, tendered his assistance as a volunteer aid, having lost every other sensation in youthful blood, and the pride of arms. He was immediately charged with orders for the advance, and driving his spurs into his steed, he dashed through the scattered line of fighting and jaded troops, and galloped to its head. Here he found several companies, diligently employed in clearing the way for their comrades, as new foes appeared at every few rods that they advanced. Even as Lionel approached, a heavy sheet of fire flashed from a close barn-yard, full in the faces of the leading files, sending the swift engines of death into the very centre of the party.

"Wheel a company of the light-infantry, Captain Polwarth," cried the old major of marines, who battled stoutly in the van, "and drive the skulking scoundrels from their ambush."

"Oh! by the sweets of ease, and the hopes of a halt! but here is another tribe of these white savages!" responded the unfortunate captain—"Look out, my brave men! blaze away over the walls on your left—give no quarter to the annoying rascals—get the first shot—give them a foot of your steel."

While venting such terrible denunciations and commands, which were drawn from the peaceable captain by the force of circumstances, Lionel beheld his friend disappear amid the buildings of the farm-yard in a cloud of smoke, followed by his troops. In a few minutes afterwards, as the line toiled its way up the hill on which this scene occurred, Polwarth reappeared, issuing from the fray with his face blackened and grimed with powder, while a sheet of flame arose from the spot, which soon laid the devoted buildings of the unfortunate husbandman in ruins.

"Ha! Major Lincoln," he cried, as he approached the other, "do you call these light-infantry movements! to me they are the torments of the damned!—Go, you who have influence, and, what is better, a horse, go to Smith, and tell him if he will call a halt, I will engage, with my single company, to seat ourselves in any field he may select, and keep these blood-suckers at bay for an hour, while the detachment can rest and satisfy their hunger—trusting that he will then allow time for his defenders to perform the same necessary operations. A night-march, no breakfast—a burning sun—mile after mile—no halt, and nothing but fire—fire—'tis opposed to every principle in physics, and even to the anatomy of man, to think he can endure it!"

Lionel endeavored to encourage his friend to new exertions, and, turning away from their leader, spoke cheeringly, and with a martial tone, to his troops. The men cheered as they passed, and dashed forward to new encounters: the Americans yielding sullenly, but necessarily, to the constant charges of the bayonet, to which the regulars resorted to dislodge them. As the advance moved on again, Lionel turned to contemplate the scene in the rear. They had now been marching and fighting for two hours, with little or no cessation; and it was but too evident that the force of the assailants was increasing, both in numbers and in daring, at each step they took. On either side of the highway, along the skirts of every wood or orchard, in the open fields, and from every house, barn, or cover in sight, the flash of fire-arms was to be seen, while the shouts of the English grew, at each instant, feebler and less inspiriting. Heavy clouds of smoke rose above the valley, into which he looked, and mingled with the dust of the march, drawing an impenetrable veil before the view; but as the wind, at moments, shoved it aside, he caught glimpses of the worried and faltering platoons of the party, sometimes breasting and repulsing an attack with spirit, and at others shrinking from the contest, with an ill-concealed desire to urge their retreat to the verge of an absolute flight. Young as he was, Major Lincoln knew enough of his profession to understand that nothing but the want of concert, and of a unity of command among the Americans, saved the detachment from total destruction. The attacks were growing extremely spirited, and not unfrequently close and bloody, though the discipline of the troops enabled them still to bear up against this desultory and divided warfare, when Lionel heard, with a pleasure he could not conceal, the loud

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shouts that arose from the van, as the cheering intelligence was proclaimed through the ranks, that the cloud of dust in their front was raised by a chosen brigade of their comrades, which had come most timely to their succor, with the heir of Northumberland at its head. The Americans gave way as the two detachments joined, and the artillery of the succors opened upon their flying parties, giving a few minutes of stolen rest to those who needed it so much. Polwarth threw himself flat on the earth, as Lionel dismounted at his side, and his example was followed by the whole party, who lay panting, under the heat and fatigue, like worried deer, that had succeeded in throwing the hounds from their scent.

"As I am a gentleman of simple habits, and a man innocent of all this bloodshed, Major Lincoln," said the captain, "I pronounce this march to be a most unjust draft on the resources of human nature. I have journeyed at least five leagues between this spot and that place of discord that they falsely call Concord, within two hours, amidst dust, smoke, groans, and other infernal cries, that would cause the best trained racer in England to bolt; and breathing an air, all the time, that would boil an egg in two minutes and a quarter, if fairly exposed to it."

"You overrate the distance—'tis but two leagues by the stones——"

"Stones!" interrupted Polwarth—"I scorn their lies—I have a leg here that is a better index for miles, feet, or even inches, than was ever chiselled in stone."

"We must not contest this idle point," returned Lionel, "for I see the troops are about to dine; and we have need of every moment to reach Boston before the night closes around us."

"Eat! Boston! night!" slowly repeated Polwarth, raising himself on one arm, and staring wildly about him. "Surely no man among us is so mad as to talk of moving from this spot short of a week—it would take half that time to receive the internal refreshment necessary to our systems, and the remainder to restore us healthy appetites."

"Such, however, are the orders of the Earl Percy, from whom I learn that the whole country is rising in our front."

"Ay, but they are fellows who slept peacefully in their beds the past night; and I dare say that every dog among them ate his half-pound of pork, together with additions suitable for a breakfast, before he crossed his threshold this morning. But with us the case is different. It is incumbent on two thousand British troops to move with deliberation, if it should be only for the credit of his majesty's arms. No, no—the gallant Percy too highly respects his princely lineage and name, to assume the appearance of flight before a mob of base-born hinds!"

The intelligence of Lionel was nevertheless true; for, after a short halt, allowing barely time enough to the troops to eat a hasty meal, the drums again beat the signal to march, and Polwarth, as well as many hundred others, was reluctantly compelled to resume his feet, under the penalty of being abandoned to the fury of the exasperated Americans. While the troops were in a state of rest, the field-pieces of the reinforcement kept their foes at a distance; but the instant the guns were limbered, and the files had once more opened for room, the attacks were renewed from every quarter, with redoubled fury. The excesses of the troops, who had begun to vent their anger by plundering and firing the dwellings that they passed, added to the bitterness of the attacks; and the march had not been renewed many minutes, before a fiercer conflict raged along its skirts than had been before witnessed on that day.

"Would to God that the great Northumbrian would form us in order of battle, and make a fair field with the Yankees," groaned Polwarth, as he toiled his way once more with the advance—"half an hour would settle the matter, and a man would then possess the gratification of seeing himself a victor, or at least of knowing that he was comfortably and quietly dead."

"Few of us would ever arrive in the morning, if we left the Americans a night to gather in; and a half of an hour would lose us the advantages of the whole march," returned Lionel. "Cheer up, my old comrade, and you will establish your reputation for activity forever—here comes a party of the provincials over the crest of the hill to keep you in employment."

Polwarth cast a look of despair at Lionel, as he muttered in reply—

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"Employment! God knows that there has not been a single muscle, sinew, or joint, in my body in a state of wholesome rest for four-and-twenty hours!" Then turning to his men, he cried, with tones so cheerful and animated, that they seemed to proceed from a final and closing exertion, as he led them gallantly into the approaching fray—"Scatter the dogs, my brave friends—away with them like gnats, like mosquitoes, like leeches, as they are—give it them—lead and steel by handfuls——"

"On—push on with the advance!" shouted the old major of marines, who observed the leading platoons to stagger.

The voice of Polwarth was once more heard in the din, and their irregular assailants sullenly yielded before the charge.

"On—on with the advance!" cried fifty voices out of a cloud of smoke and dust that was moving up the hill, on whose side this encounter occurred.

In this manner the war continued to roll slowly onward, following the weary and heavy footsteps of the soldiery, who had now toiled for many miles, surrounded by the din of battle, and leaving in their path the bloody impressions of their footsteps. Lionel was enabled to trace their route, far towards the north, by the bright red spots, which lay scattered in alarming numbers along the highway, and in the fields, through which the troops occasionally moved. He even found time, in the intervals of rest, to note the difference in the characters of the combatants. Whenever the ground or the circumstances admitted of a regular attack, the dying confidence of the troops would seem restored; and they moved up to the charge with the bold carriage which high discipline inspires, rending the air with shouts, while their enemies melted before their power in sullen silence, never ceasing to use their weapons, however, with an expertness that rendered them doubly dangerous. The direction of the columns frequently brought the troops over ground that had been sharply contested in front, and the victims of these short struggles came under the eyes of the detachment. It was necessary to turn a deaf ear to the cries and prayers of many wounded soldiers, who, with horror and abject fear written on every feature of their countenances, were the helpless witnesses of the retreating files of their comrades. On the other hand, the American lay in his blood, regarding the passing detachment with a stern and indignant eye, that appeared to look far beyond his individual suffering. Over one body, Lionel pulled the reins of his horse, and he paused a moment to consider the spectacle. It was the lifeless form of a man, whose white locks, hollow cheeks, and emaciated frame, denoted that the bullet which had stricken him to the earth had anticipated the irresistible decrees of time but a very few days. He had fallen on his back, and his glazed eye expressed, even in death, the honest resentment he had felt while living: and his palsied hand continued to grasp the firelock, old and time-worn, like its owner, with which he had taken the field in behalf of his country.

"Where can a contest end which calls such champions to its aid!" exclaimed Lionel, observing that the shadow of another spectator fell across the wan features of the dead—"who can tell where this torrent of blood can be stayed, or how many are to be its victims!"

Receiving no answer, he raised his eyes, and discovered that he had unwittingly put this searching question to the very man whose rashness had precipitated the war. It was the major of marines, who sat looking at the sight, for a minute, with an eye as vacant as the one that seemed to throw back his wild gaze, and then, rousing from his trance, he buried his rowels in the flanks of his horse, and disappeared in the smoke that enveloped a body of the grenadiers, waving his sword on high, and shouting—

"On—push on with the advance!"

Major Lincoln slowly followed, musing on the scene he had witnessed, when, to his surprise, he encountered Polwarth, seated on a rock by the roadside, looking with a listless and dull eye at the retreating columns. Checking his charger, he inquired of his friend if he were hurt.

"Only melted," returned the captain; "I have outdone the speed of man this day, Major Lincoln, and can do no more. If you see any of my friends in dear England, tell them that I met my fate as a soldier should, stationary; though I am actually

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melting away in rivulets, like the snows of April."

"Good God! you will not remain here to be slain by the provincials, by whom you see we are completely enveloped?"

"I am preparing a speech for the first Yankee who may approach. If he be a true man, he will melt into tears at my sufferings this day—if a savage, my heirs will be spared the charges of my funeral."

Lionel would have continued his remonstrances, but a fierce encounter between a flanking party of the troops and a body of Americans, drove the former close upon him; and, leaping the wall, he rallied his comrades, and turned the tide of battle in their favor. He was drawn far from the spot by the vicissitudes of the combat, and there was a moment, while passing from one body of the troops to another, that he found himself unexpectedly alone, in a most dangerous vicinity to a small wood. The hurried call of "Pick off that officer!" first aroused him to his extreme danger, and he had mechanically bowed himself on the neck of his charger, in expectation of the fatal messengers, when a voice was heard among the Americans, crying, in tones that caused every nerve in his body to thrill—

"Spare him! for the love of that God you worship, spare him!"

The overwhelming sensations of the moment prevented flight, and the young man beheld Ralph, running with frantic gestures, along the skirts of the cover, beating up the fire-arms of twenty Americans, and repeating his cries in a voice that did not seem to belong to a human being—then, in the confusion which whirled through his brain, Lionel thought himself a prisoner, as a man, armed with a long rifle, glided from the wood, and laid his hand on the rein of his bridle, saying earnestly—

"'Tis a bloody day, and God will remember it; but if Major Lincoln will ride straight down the hill, the people won't fire for fear of hitting Job—and when Job fires, he'll shoot that granny who's getting over the wall, and there'll never be a stir about it in Funnel-Hall."

Lionel wheeled away quicker than thought, and as his charger took long and desperate leaps down the slight declivity, he heard the shouts of the Americans behind him, the crack of Job's rifle, and the whizzing of the bullet which the changeling sent, as he had promised, in a direction to do him no harm. On gaining a place of comparative safety, he found Pitcairn in the act of abandoning his bleeding horse, the close and bitter attacks of the provincials rendering it no longer safe for an officer to be seen riding on the flanks of the detachment. Lionel, though he valued his steed highly, had also received so many intimations of the dangerous notice he had attracted, that he was soon obliged to follow this example; and he saw, with deep regret, the noble animal scouring across the fields with a loose rein, snorting and snuffing the tainted air. He now joined a party of the combatants on foot, and continued to animate them to new exertions during the remainder of the tedious way.

From the moment the spires of Boston met the view of the troops, the struggle became intensely interesting. New vigor was imparted to their weary frames by the cheering sight, and, assuming once more the air of high martial training, they bore up against the assaults of their enemies with renewed spirit. On the other hand, the Americans seemed aware that the moments of vengeance were passing swiftly away, and boys, and gray-headed men, the wounded and the active, crowded around their invaders, as if eager to obtain a parting blow. Even the peaceful ministers of God were known to take the field on that memorable occasion, and, mingling with their parishioners, to brave every danger in a cause which they believed in consonance with their holy calling. The sun was sinking over the land, and the situation of the detachment had become nearly desperate, when Percy abandoned the idea of reaching the Neck, across which he had proudly marched that morning from Boston, and strained every nerve to get the remainder of his command within the peninsula of Charlestown. The crests and the sides of the heights were alive with men, and as the shades of evening closed about the combatants, the bosoms of the Americans beat high with hope, while they witnessed the faltering steps and slackened fire of the troops. But high discipline finally so far prevailed as to snatch the English from the

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very grasp of destruction, and enabled them to gain the narrow entrance to the desired shelter, just as night had come apparently to seal their doom.

Lionel stood leaning against a fence, as this fine body of men, which a few hours before had thought themselves equal to a march through the colonies, defiled slowly and heavily by him, dragging their weary and exhausted limbs up the toilsome ascent of Bunker-Hill. The haughty eyes of most of the officers were bent to the earth in shame; and the common herd, even in that place of security, cast many an anxious glance behind them, to assure themselves that the despised inhabitants of the province were no longer pressing on their footsteps. Platoon after platoon passed, each man compelled to depend on his own wearied limbs for support, until Lionel at last saw a solitary horseman slowly ascending among the crowd. To his utter amazement and great joy, as this officer approached, he beheld Polwarth, mounted on his own steed, riding toward him, with a face of the utmost complacency and composure. The dress of the captain was torn in many places, and the housings of the saddle were cut into ribbons, while here and there a spot of clotted blood, on the sides of the beast, served to announce the particular notice the rider had received from the Americans. The truth was soon extorted from the honest soldier. The love of life had returned with the sight of the abandoned charger. He acknowledged it had cost him his watch to have the beast caught; but, once established in the saddle, no danger, nor any remonstrances, could induce him to relinquish a seat which he found so consoling after all the fatigue and motion of that evil day, in which he had been compelled to share in the calamities of those who fought on the side of the crown, in the memorable battle of Lexington.

CHAPTER XI.

"*Fluel.*—Is it not lawful, an' please your majesty, To tell how many is killed?"—*King Henry V.*

WHILE a strong party of the royal troops took post on the height which commanded the approach to their position, the remainder penetrated deeper into the peninsula, or were transported by the boats of the fleet to the town of Boston. Lionel and Polwarth passed the strait with the first division of the wounded, the former having no duty to detain him any longer with the detachment, and the latter stoutly maintaining that his corporeal sufferings gave him an undoubted claim to include his case among the casualties of the day. Perhaps no officer in the army of the king felt less chagrin at the result of this inroad than Major Lincoln; for, notwithstanding his attachment to his prince, and adopted country, he was keenly sensitive on the subject of the reputation of his real countrymen; a sentiment that is honorable to our nature, and which never deserts any that do not become disloyal to its purest and noblest impulses. Even while he regretted the price at which his comrades had been taught to appreciate the characters of those whose long and mild forbearance had been misconstrued into pusillanimity, he rejoiced that the eyes of the more aged would now be opened to the truth, and that the mouths of the young and thoughtless were to be for ever closed in shame. Although the actual losses of the two detachments were probably concealed from motives of policy, it was early acknowledged to amount to about one-sixth of the whole number employed.

On the wharf Lionel and Polwarth separated; the latter agreeing to repair speedily to the private quarters of his friend, where he promised himself a solace for the compulsory abstinence and privations of his long march, and the former taking his way toward Tremont Street, with a view to allay the uneasiness which the secret and flattering whisperings of hope taught him to believe his fair young kinswomen would feel in his behalf. At every corner he encountered groups of earnest townsmen, listening with greedy ears to the particulars of the contest, a few walking away dejected at the spirit exhibited by that country they had vilified to its oppressors; but most of them regarding the passing form of one whose disordered dress announced his participation in the affair, with glances of stern satisfaction. As Lionel tapped at the door of Mrs. Lechmere, he forgot his fatigue; and when it opened, and he beheld Cecil standing in the hall, with every lineament of

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her fine countenance expressing the power of her emotions, he no longer remembered those trying dangers he had so lately escaped.

"Lionel!" exclaimed the young lady, clasping her hands with joy—"himself, and unhurt!" The blood rushed from her heart across her face to her forehead, and burying her shame in her hands, she burst into a flood of tears, and fled his presence.

Agnes Danforth received him with undisguised pleasure, nor would she indulge in a single question to appease her burning curiosity, until thoroughly assured of his perfect safety. Then, indeed, she remarked, with a smile of triumph seated on her arch features—

"Your march has been well attended, Major Lincoln; from the upper windows I have seen some of the honors which the good people of Massachusetts have paid to their visitors."

"On my soul, if it were not for the dreadful consequences which must follow, I rejoice, as well as yourself, in the events of the day," said Lincoln; "for a people are never certain of their rights until they are respected."

"Tell me, then, all, cousin Lincoln, that I may know how to boast of my parentage."

The young man gave her a short, but distinct and impartial, account of all that had occurred, to which his fair listener attended with undisguised interest.

"Now, then," she exclaimed, as he ended, "there is an end forever of those biting taunts that have so long insulted our ears! But you know," she added, with a slight blush, and a smile most comically arch, "I had a double stake in the fortunes of the day—my country and my true love!"

"Oh! be at ease; your worshipper has returned, whole in body, and suffering in mind only through your cruelty—he performed the route with wonderful address, and really showed himself a soldier in danger."

"Nay, Major Lincoln," returned Agnes, still blushing, though she laughed; "you do not mean to insinuate that Peter Polwarth has walked forty miles between the rising and setting of the sun?"

"Between two sunsets he has done the deed, if you except a trifling *promenade à cheval*, on my own steed, whom Jonathan compelled me to abandon, and of whom he took, and maintained the possession, too, in spite of dangers of every kind."

"Really," exclaimed the wilful girl, clasping her hands in affected astonishment, though Lionel thought he could read inward satisfaction at his intelligence—"the prodigies of the man exceed belief! one wants the faith of father Abraham to credit such marvels! though, after the repulse of two thousand British soldiers by a body of husbandmen, I am prepared for an exceeding use of my credulity."

"The moment is then auspicious for my friend," whispered Lionel, rising to follow the flitting form of Cecil Dynevor, which he saw gliding into the opposite room, as Polwarth himself entered the apartment. "Credulity is said to be the great weakness of your sex, and I must leave you a moment exposed to the failing, and that too, in the dangerous company of the subject of our discourse."

"Now would you give half your hopes of promotion, and all your hopes of a war, Captain Polwarth, to know in what manner your character has been treated in your absence!" cried Agnes, blushing slightly. "I shall not, however, satisfy the cravings of your curiosity, but let it serve as a stimulant to better deeds than have employed you since we met last."

"I trust Lincoln has done justice to my service," returned the good-humored captain, "and that he has not neglected to mention the manner in which I rescued his steed from the rebels."

"The what, sir?" interrupted Agnes, with a frown—"How did you style the good people of Massachusetts Bay?"

"I should have said the excited dwellers in the land, I believe. Ah! Miss Agnes, I have suffered this day as man never suffered before; and all on your behalf——"

"On my behalf! Your words require explanation, Captain Polwarth."

"'Tis impossible," returned the captain—"there are feelings and actions connected with the heart that will admit of no explanation. All I know is, that I have suffered unutterably on your account to-day; and what is unutterable, is in a great degree inexplicable."

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"I shall set this down for what I understand occurs regularly in a certain description of tête-à-têtes—the expression of an unutterable thing! Surely, Major Lincoln had some reason to believe he left me at the mercy of my credulity!"

"You slander your own character, fair Agnes," said Polwarth, endeavoring to look piteously; "you are neither merciful nor credulous, or you would long since have believed my tale, and taken pity on my misery."

"Is not sympathy a sort—a kind—in short, is not sympathy a dreadful symptom in a certain disease?" asked Agnes, resting her eyes on the floor, and affecting a girlish embarrassment.

"Who can gainsay it!" cried the captain; "'tis the infallible way for a young lady to discover the bent of her inclinations. Thousands have lived in ignorance of their own affections until their sympathies have been awakened. But what means the question, my fair tormentor? May I dare to flatter myself that you at length feel for my pains!"

"I am sadly afraid 'tis but too true, Polwarth," returned Agnes, shaking her head, and continuing to look exceedingly grave.

Polwarth moved, with something like animation again, nigher to the amused girl; and attempted to take her hand, as he said—

"You restore me to life with your sweet acknowledgments—I have lived for six months like a dog under your frowns, but one kind word acts like a healing balm and restores me to myself again!"

"Then my sympathy is evaporated!" returned Agnes, "Throughout this long and anxious day have I fancied myself older than my good, staid, great-aunt; and whenever certain thoughts have crossed my mind, I have even imagined a thousand of the ailings of age had encircled me—rheumatisms, gouts, asthmas, and numberless other aches and pains, exceedingly unbecoming to a young lady of nineteen. But you have enlightened me, and given vast relief to my apprehensions, by explaining it to be no more than sympathy. You see, Polwarth, what a wife you will obtain, should I ever, in a weak moment, accept you; for I have already sustained one half your burthens!"

"A man is not made to be in constant motion, like the pendulum of that clock, Miss Danforth, and yet feel no fatigue," said Polwarth, more vexed than he would permit himself to betray; "yet I flatter myself there is no officer in the light infantry—you understand me to say the light infantry—who has passed over more ground, within four-and-twenty hours, than the man who hastens, notwithstanding his exploits, to throw himself at your feet, even before he thinks of his ordinary rest."

"Captain Polwarth," said Agnes, "rising, "for the compliment, if compliment it be, I thank you; but," she added, losing her affeced gravity in a strong natural feeling that shone in her dark eye, and illuminated the whole of her fine countenance, as she laid her hand impressively on her heart—"the man who will supplant the feelings that nature has impressed here must not come to my feet, as you call it, from a field of battle, where he has been contending with my kinsmen, and helping to enslave my country. You will excuse me, sir, but as Major Lincoln is at home here, permit me, for a few minutes, to leave you to his hospitality."

She withdrew as Lionel re-entered, passing him on the threshold.

"I would rather be a leader in a stage-coach, or a running footman, than in love!" cried Polwarth—"'tis a dog's life, Leo, and this girl treats me like a cart-horse! But what an eye she has! I could have lighted my segar by it—my heart is a heap of cinders. Why, Leo, what aileth thee? throughout the whole of this damnable day, I have not before seen thee bear such a troubled look!"

"Let us withdraw to my private quarters," muttered the young man, whose aspect and air expressed the marks of extreme disturbance—"'tis time to repair the disasters of our march."

"All that has been already looked to," said Polwarth, rising and limping, with sundry grimaces, in the best manner he was able, in a vain effort to equal the rapid strides of his companion. "My first business on leaving you was to borrow a conveyance of a friend, in which I rode to your place; and my next was to write to little Jimmy Craig, to offer an exchange of my company for his—for from this hour henceforth I denounce all light-infantry movements, and shall take the first opportunity to get back again into the

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dragoons; as soon as I have effected which, Major Lincoln, I propose to treat with you for the purchase of that horse. After that duty was performed—for, if self-preservation be commendable, it became a duty—I made out a bill of fare for Meriton, in order that nothing might be forgotten; after which, like yourself, Lionel, I hastened to the feet of my mistress—ah! Major Lincoln, you are a happy man; for you there is no reception but smiles—and charms so——"

"Talk not to me, sir, of smiles," interrupted Lionel, impatiently, "nor of the charms of woman. They are all alike, capricious and unaccountable."

"Bless me!" exclaimed Polwarth, staring about him in wonder; "there is then favor for none, in this place, who battle for the king! There is a strange connection between Cupid and Mars, love and war; for here did I, after fighting all day like a Saracen, a Turk, Genghis Khan, or, in short, anything but a good Christian, come with full intent to make a serious offer of my hand, commission, and of Polwarth Hall, to that treasonable vixen, when she repulses me with a frown and a sarcasm as biting as the salutation of a hungry man. But what an eye the girl has, and what a bloom, when she is a little more seasoned than common! Then you, too, Lionel, have been treated like a dog!"

"Like a fool, as I am," said Lionel, pacing haughtily over the ground at a rate that soon threw his companion too far in the rear to admit of further discourse until they reached the place of their destination. Here, to the no small surprise of both gentlemen, they found a company collected that neither was prepared to meet. At a side-table sat M'Fuse, discussing, with singular relish, some of the cold viands of the previous night's repast, and washing down his morsels with deep potations of the best wine of his host. In one corner of the room Seth Sage was posted, with the appearance of a man in duress, his hands being tied before him, from which depended a long cord, that might, on emergency, be made to serve the purpose of a halter. Opposite to the prisoner, for such in truth he was, stood Job, imitating the example of the captain of grenadiers, who now and then tossed some fragment of his meal into the hat of the simpleton. Meriton and several of the menials of the establishment were in waiting.

"What have we here?" cried Lionel, regarding the scene with a curious eye. "Of what offence has Mr. Sage been guilty, that he bears those bonds?"

"Of the small crimes of tr'ason and homicide," returned M'Fuse, "if shooting at a man, with a hearty mind to kill him, can make a murder."

"It can't," said Seth, raising his eyes from the floor, where he had hitherto kept them in demure silence; "a man must kill with wicked intent to commit murder——"

"Hear to the blackguard, detailing the law as if he were my lord chief justice of the King's Bench!" interrupted the grenadier; "and what was your own wicked intention, ye skulking vagabond, but to kill me? I'll have you tried and hung for the same act."

"It's ag'in reason to believe that any jury will convict one man for the murder of another that an't dead," said Seth—"there's no jury to be found in the Bay colony, to do it."

"Bay colony, ye murdering thief and rebel!" cried the captain; "I'll have ye transported to England; ye shall be both transported and hung. By the Lord, I'll carry ye back to Ireland with me, and I'll hang ye up in the Green Island itself, and bury ye, in the heart of winter, in a bog——"

"But what is the offence," demanded Lionel, "that calls forth these severe threats?"

"The scoundrel has been out——"

"Out!"

"Ay, out! Damn it, sir, has not the whole country been like so many bees in search of a hive? Is your memory so short that ye forget already, Major Lincoln, the tramp the blackguards have given you over hill and dale, through thick and thin?"

"And was Mr. Sage, then, found among our enemies to-day?"

"Didn't I see him pull trigger on my own stature three times within as many minutes?" returned the angry captain; "and didn't he break the handle of my sword? and have not I a bit of lead he calls a buck-shot in my shoulder as a present from the thief?"

"It's ag'in all law to call a man a thief," said Job, "unless you can prove it upon him;

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but it an't ag'in law to go in and out of Boston as often as you choose."

"Do you hear the rascals? They know every angle of the law as well or better than I do myself, who am the son of a Cork counsellor. I dare to say you were among them too, and that ye deserve the gallows as well as your commendable companion there."

"How is this?" said Lionel, turning quickly away from Job, with a view to prevent a reply that might endanger the safety of the changeling; "did you not only mingle in this rebellion, Mr. Sage, but also attempt the life of a gentleman who may be said, almost, to be an inmate of your own house?"

"I conclude," returned Seth, "it's best not to talk too much, seeing that no one can foretell what may happen."

"Hear to the cunning reprobate! He has not the grace to acknowledge his own sins, like an honest man," interrupted M'Fuse; "but I can save him that small trouble—I got tired, you must know, Major Lincoln, of being shot at like noxious vermin, from morning till night, without making some return to the compliments of those gentlemen who are out on the hills; and I took advantage of a turn, ye see, to double on a party of the uncivilized demons. This lad, here, got three good pulls at me before we closed and made an end of them with the steel, all but this fellow, who, having a becoming look for a gallows, I brought him in, as you see, for an exchange, intending to hang him the first favorable opportunity."

"If this be true, we must give him into the hands of the proper authorities," said Lionel, smiling at the confused account of the angry captain—"for it remains to be seen yet what course will be adopted with the prisoners in this singular contest."

"I should think nothing of the matter," returned M'Fuse, "if the reprobate had not tr'ated me like a beast of the field, with his buck-shot, and taking his aim each time, as though I had been a mad dog. Ye villain, do you call yourself a man, and aim at a fellow-creature as you would at a brute?"

"Why," said Seth, sullenly, "when a man has pretty much made up his mind to fight, I conclude it's best to take aim, in order to save ammunition and time."

"You acknowledge the charge, then?" demanded Lionel.

"As the major is a moderate man, and will hear to reason, I will talk the matter over with him rationally," said Seth, disposing himself to speak more to the purpose. "You see, I had a small call to Concurd early this morning——"

"Concord!" exclaimed Lionel.

"Yes, Concurd," returned Seth, laying great stress on the first syllable, and speaking with an air of extreme innocence—"it lies here-away, say twenty or one-and-twenty miles——"

"Damn your Concords and your miles too," cried Polwarth; "is there a man in the army who can forget the deceitful place? Go on with your defence, without talking to us of the distance, who have measured the road by inches."

"The captain is hasty and rash!" said the deliberate prisoner—"but being there, I went out of the town with some company that I happened in with; and after a time we concluded to return—and so, as we came to a bridge about a mile beyond the place, we received considerable rough treatment from some of the king's troops, who were standing there——"

"What did they?"

"They fired at us, and killed two of our company, besides other threatening doings. There were some among us that took the matter up in considerable earnest, and there was a sharp toss about it for a few minutes; though finally the law prevailed."

"The law!"

"Certain—'tis ag'in all law, I believe the major will own, to shoot peaceable men on the public highway!"

"Proceed with your tale in your own way."

"That is pretty much the whole of it," said Seth, warily. "The people rather took that, and some other things that happened at Lexington, to heart, and I suppose the major knows the rest."

"But what has all this to do with your attempt to murder me, you hypocrite?" demanded M'Fuse—"confess the whole, ye thief, that I may hang you with an aisy conscience."

"Enough," said Lionel; "the man has acknowledged sufficient already to justify us in

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transferring him to the custody of others—let him be taken to the main guard, and delivered as a prisoner of this day."

"I hope the major will look to the things," said Seth, who instantly prepared to depart, but stopped on the threshold to speak—"I shall hold him accountable for all."

"Your property shall be protected, and I hope your life may not be in jeopardy," returned Lionel, waving his hand for those who guarded him to proceed. Seth turned, and left his own dwelling with the same quiet air which had distinguished him throughout the day; though there were occasional flashes from his quick, dark eyes, that looked like the glimmerings of a fading fire. Notwithstanding the threatening denunciation he had encountered, he left the house with a perfect conviction, that if his case were to be tried by those principles of justice which every man in the colony so well understood, it would be found that both he and his fellows had kept thoroughly on the windy side of the law.

During this singular and characteristic discourse, Polwarth, with the solitary exception we have recorded, had employed his time in forwarding the preparations for the banquet.

As Seth and his train disappeared, Lionel cast a furtive look at Job, who was a quiet, and apparently an undisturbed, spectator of the scene, and then turned his attention suddenly to his guests, as if fearful the folly of the changeling might betray his agency also in the deeds of the day. The simplicity of the lad, however, defeated the kind intentions of the major, for he immediately observed, without the least indication of fear—

"The king can't hang Seth Sage for firing back, when the rake-helly soldiers began first."

"Perhaps you were out too, master Solomon," cried M'Fuse, "amusing yourself at Concord, with a small party of select friends?"

"Job didn't go any further than Lexington," returned the lad, "and he hasn't got any friend, except old Nab."

"The devil has possessed the minds of the people!" continued the grenadier—"lawyers and doctors—praists and sinners—old and young—big and little, beset us in our march, and here is a fool to be added to the number! I dare say that fellow, now, has attempted murder in his day too."

"Job scorns such wickedness," returned the unmoved simpleton; "he only shot one granny, and hit an officer in the arm."

"D'ye hear that, Major Lincoln?" cried M'Fuse, jumping from the seat which, notwithstanding the bitterness of his language, he had hitherto perseveringly maintained; "d'ye hear that shell of a man, that effigy, boasting of having killed a grenadier?"

"Hold!"—interrupted Lionel, arresting his excited companion by the arm—"remember we are soldiers, and that the boy is not a responsible being. No tribunal would ever sentence such an unfortunate creature to a gibbet; and in general he is as harmless as a babe——"

"The devil burn such babes—a pretty fellow is he to kill a man of six feet! and with a ducking gun, I'll engage. I'll not hang the rascal, Major Lincoln, since it is your particular wish—I'll only have him buried alive."

Job continued perfectly unmoved in his chair; and the captain, ashamed of his resentment against such unconscious imbecility, was soon persuaded to abandon his intentions of revenge, though he continued muttering his threats against the provincials, and his denunciations against such "an unmanly spacies of warfare," until the much-needed repast was ended.

Polwarth, having restored the equilibrium of his system by a hearty meal, hobbled to his bed, and M'Fuse, without any ceremony, took possession of another of the apartments in the tenement of Mr. Sage. The servants withdrew to their own entertainment; and Lionel, who had been sitting for the last half-hour in melancholy silence, now unexpectedly found himself alone with the changeling. Job had waited for this moment with exceeding patience, but when the door closed on Meriton, who was the last to retire, he made a movement that indicated some communication of more than usual importance, and succeeded in attracting the attention of his companion.

"Foolish boy!" exclaimed Lionel, as he met the unmeaning eye of the other, "did I not warn you that wicked men might en-

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danger your life? How was it that I saw you in arms to-day against the troops?"

"How came the troops in arms ag'in Job?" returned the changeling—"they needn't think to wheel about the Bay province, clashing their godless drums and trumpets, burning housen, and shooting people, and find no stir about it!"

"Do you know that your life has been twice forfeited within twelve hours, by your own confession; once for murder, and again for treason against your king? You have acknowledged killing a man!"

"Yes," said the lad, with undisturbed simplicity, "Job shot the granny; but he didn't let the people kill Major Lincoln."

"True, true," said Lionel, hastily—"I owe my life to you, and that debt shall be cancelled at every hazard. But why have you put yourself into the hands of your enemies so thoughtlessly? what brings you here to-night?"

"Ralph told me to come; and if Ralph told Job to go into the king's parlor, he would go."

"Ralph!" exclaimed Lionel, stopping in his hurried walk across the room, "and where is he?"

"In the old ware'us'; and he has sent me to tell you to come to him; and what Ralph says must be done."

"He here too! is the man crazed?—would not his fears teach him——"

"Fears!" interrupted Job, with singular disdain—"you can't frighten Ralph! The grannies couldn't frighten him, nor the light-infantry couldn't hit him, though he eat nothing but their smoke the whole day—Ralph's a proper warrior!"

"And he waits me, you say, in the tenement of your mother?"

"Job don't know what tenement means, but he's in the old ware'us'."

"Come, then," said Lionel, taking his hat, "let us go to him—I must save him from the effects of his own rashness, though it cost my commission!"

He left the room while speaking, and the simpleton followed close at his heels, well content with having executed his mission without encountering any greater difficulties.

CHAPTER XII.

"This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna; Gonzago is the duke's name; his wife, Baptista: You shall see, anon; 'tis a knavish piece of work."
—*Hamlet.*

THE agitation and deep excitement produced by the events of the day had not yet subsided in the town, when Lionel found himself again in its narrow streets. Men passed swiftly by him, as if bent on some unusual and earnest business; and more than once the young soldier detected the triumphant smiles of the women, as they looked curiously out on the scene, from their half-open windows, and their eyes detected the professional trappings of his dress. Strong bodies of the troops were marching in different directions, and in a manner which denoted that the guards were strengthening, while the few solitary officers he met watched his approaching figure with cautious jealousy, as if they apprehended a dangerous enemy in every form they encountered.

The gates of Province-House were open, and, as usual, guarded by armed men. As Lionel passed leisurely along, he perceived that the grenadier to whom he had spoken on the preceding evening again held his watch before the portal of the governor.

"Your experience did not deceive you, my old comrade," said Lionel, lingering a moment to address him—"we have had a warm day."

"So it is reported in the barracks, your honor," returned the soldier—"our company was not ordered out, and we are to stand double duty. I hope to God the next time there is anything to do, the grenadiers of the ——th may not be left behind—it would have been for the credit of the army had they been in the field to-day."

"Why do you think so, my veteran? The men who were out are thought to have behaved well; but it was impossible to make head against a multitude in arms."

"It is not my place, your honor, to say, this man did well, and that man behaved amiss," returned the proud old soldier; "but when I hear of two thousand British troops turning their backs, or quickening their march, before all the rabble this country can muster, I want the flank companies of the ——th to be at hand, if it should be only

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that I may say I have witnessed the disgraceful sight with my own eyes."

"There is no disgrace where there is no misconduct," said Lionel.

"There must have been misconduct somewhere, your honor, or such a thing could not have happened—consider, your honor, the very flower of the army! Something must have been wrong; and although I could see the latter part of the business from the hills, I can hardly believe it to be true." As he concluded, he shook his head, and continued his steady pace along his allotted ground, as if unwilling to pursue the humiliating subject any further. Lionel passed slowly on, musing on that deep-rooted prejudice, which had even taught this humble menial of the crown to regard with contempt a whole nation, because they were believed to be dependents.

The Dock Square was stiller than usual, and the sounds of revelry, which it was usual to hear at that hour from the adjacent drinking-houses, were no longer audible. The moon had not yet risen, and Lionel passed the dark arches of the market with a quick step, as he now remembered that one in whom he felt so deep an interest awaited his appearance. Job, who had followed in silence, glided by him on the drawbridge, and stood holding the door of the old building in his hand, when he reached its threshold. Lionel found the large space in the centre of the warehouse, as usual, dark and empty, though the dim light of a candle glimmered through the fissures in a partition, which separated an apartment, in one of the little towers, that was occupied by Abigail Pray, from the ruder parts of the edifice. Low voices were also heard issuing from this room, and Major Lincoln, supposing he should find the old man and the mother of Job in conference together, turned to request the lad would precede him, and announce his name. But the changeling had also detected the whispering sounds, and it would seem with a more cunning ear, for he turned and darted through the door of the building with a velocity that did not abate until Lionel, who watched his movements with amazement, saw his shuffling figure disappear among the shambles of the market-place. Thus deserted by his guide, Lionel groped his way toward the place where he believed he should find the door which led into the tower. The light deceived him; for, as he approached it, his eye glanced through one of the crevices of the wall, and he again became an unintentional witness of another of those interviews, which evinced the singular and mysterious affinity between the fortunes of the affluent and respected Mrs. Lechmere and the miserable tenant of the warehouse. Until that moment, the hurry of events, and the crowd of reflections, which had rushed over the mind of the young man, throughout the busy time of the last twenty-four hours, had prevented his recalling the hidden meaning of the singular discourse of which he had already been an auditor. But now, when he found his aunt led into these haunts of beggary, by a feeling he was not weak enough to attribute to her charity, he stood rooted to the spot by a curiosity, which, at the same time that he found it irresistible, he was willing to excuse, under a strong impression that these private communications were in some way connected with himself.

Mrs. Lechmere had evidently muffled her person in a manner that was intended to conceal this mysterious visit from any casual observer of her movements; but the hoops of her large calash were now so far raised as to admit a distinct view of her withered features, and of the hard eye which shot forth its selfish, worldly glances, from amid the surrounding decay of nature. She was seated, both in indulgence to her infirmities, and from that assumption of superiority she never neglected in the presence of her inferiors, while her companion stood before her, in an attitude that partook more of restraint than of respect.

"Your weakness, foolish woman," said Mrs. Lechmere, in those stern, repulsive tones she so well knew how to use, when she wished to intimidate, "will yet prove your ruin. You owe it to respect for yourself, to your character, and even to your safety, that you should exhibit more firmness, and show yourself above this weak and idle superstition."

"My ruin! and my character!" returned Abigail, looking about her with a haggard eye and a trembling lip; "what is ruin, Madam Lechmere, if this poverty be not called so? or what loss of character can bring upon me

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more biting scorn than I am now ordained to suffer for my sins?"

"Perhaps," said Mrs. Lechmere, endeavoring to affect a kinder tone, though dislike was still too evident in her manner, "in the hurry of my grandnephew's reception, I have forgotten my usual liberality."

The woman took the piece of silver which Mrs. Lechmere slowly placed in her hand, and held it in her open palm for several moments, regarding it with a vacant look, which the other mistook for dissatisfaction.

"The troubles, and the decreasing value of property, have sensibly affected my income," continued the richly clad and luxurious Mrs. Lechmere; "but if that should be too little for your immediate wants, I will add to it another crown."

"'Twill do—'twill do," said Abigail, clenching her hand over the money, with a grasp that was convulsive—"yes, yes, 'twill do. Oh! Madam Lechmere, humbling and sinful as that wicked passion is, would to God that no motive worse than avarice had proved my ruin!"

Lionel thought his aunt cast an uneasy and embarrassed glance at her companion, which he construed into an expression that betrayed there were secrets even between these strange confidants; but the momentary surprise exhibited in her features soon gave place to her habitual look of guarded and severe formality; and she replied, with an air of coldness, as if she would repulse any approach to an acknowledgment of their common transgression—

"The woman talks like one who is beside herself! Of what crime has she been guilty, but such as those to which our nature is liable!"

"True, true," said Abigail Pray, with a half-stifled, hysterical laugh—"'tis our guilty, guilty nature, as you say. But I grow nervous, I believe, as I grow old and feeble, Madam Lechmere; and I often forget myself. The sight of the grave, so very near, is apt to bring thoughts of repentance to such as are more hardened even than I."

"Foolish girl!" said Mrs. Lechmere, endeavoring to screen her pallid features, by drawing down her calash, with a hand that trembled more with terror than with age; "why should you speak thus freely of death, who are but a child?"

Lionel heard the faltering, husky tones of his aunt, as they appeared to die in her throat, but nothing more was distinctly audible, until, after a long pause, she raised her face, and looked about her again with her severe, unbending eye, and continued—

"Enough of this folly, Abigail Pray—I have come to learn more of your strange inmate——"

"Oh! 'tis not enough, Madam Lechmere," interrupted the conscience-stricken woman; "we have so little time left us for penitence and prayer, that there never can be enough, I fear, to answer our mighty transgressions. Let us speak of the grave, Madam Lechmere, while we can yet do it on this side of eternity."

"Ay! speak of the grave, while out of its damp cloisters; 'tis the home of the aged," said a third voice, whose hollow tones might well have issued from some tomb, "and I am here to join in the wholesome theme."

"Who—who—in the name of God, who art thou?" exclaimed Mrs. Lechmere, forgetting her infirmities, and her secret compunctions, in new emotions, and rising involuntarily from her seat; "tell me, I conjure thee, who art thou?"

"One, aged like thyself, Priscilla Lechmere, and standing on the threshold of that final home of which you would discourse. Speak on, then, ye widowed women; for if ever ye have done aught that calls for forgiveness, 'tis in the grave ye shall find the heavenly gift of merey offered to your unworthiness."

By changing the position of his body a little, Lionel was now enabled to command a view of the whole apartment. In the doorway stood Ralph, immovable in his attitude, with one hand raised high toward heaven, and the other pointing impressively downward, as if about to lay bare the secrets of that tomb, of which his wasted limbs, and faded lineaments, marked him as a fit tenant, while his searching eyeballs glared about him, from the face of one to the other, with that look of quickness and penetration, that Abigail Pray had so well described as "scorching." Within a few feet of the old man, Mrs. Lechmere remained standing, rigid and motionless as marble, her calash fallen back, and her death-

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like features exposed, with horror and astonishment rooted in every muscle, as, with open mouth, and eyes riveted on the intruder, she gazed as steadily as if placed in that posture by the chisel of the statuary. Abigail shaded her eyes with her hand, and buried her face in the folds of her garments, while strong convulsive shudderings ran through her frame, and betrayed the extent of the emotions she endeavored to conceal. Amazed at what he had witnessed, and concerned for the apparent insensibility of his aunt, whose great age rendered such scenes dangerous, Lionel was about to rush into the apartment, when Mrs. Lechmere so far recovered her faculties as to speak, and the young man lost every consideration in a burning curiosity, which was powerfully justified by his situation.

"Who is it that calls me by the name of Priscilla?" said Mrs. Lechmere; "none now live who can claim to be so familiar."

"Priscilla, Priscilla," repeated the old man, looking about him, as if he would require the presence of another; "it is a soft and pleasant sound to my ears, and there is one that owns it besides thee, as thou knowest."

"She is dead; years have gone by since I saw her in her coffin; and I would forget her, and all like her, who have proved unworthy of my blood."

"She is *not* dead!"—shouted the old man, in a voice that rung through the naked rafters of the edifice like the unearthly tones of some spirit of the air; "she lives!—she lives!—ay! she yet lives!"

"Lives!" repeated Mrs. Lechmere, recoiling a step before the forward movement of the other; "why am I so weak as to listen! 'tis impossible."

"Lives!" exclaimed Abigail Pray, clasping her hands with agony. "Oh! would to God she did live! but did I not see her a bloated, disfigured corpse? did I not with these very hands place the grave-clothes about her once lovely frame? Oh! no—she is dead—dead—and I am a——"

"'Tis some madman that asserts these idle tales," exclaimed Mrs. Lechmere, with a quickness that interrupted the criminal epithet the other was about to apply to herself. "The unfortunate girl is long since dead, as we know; why should we reason with a maniac?"

"Maniac!" repeated Ralph, with an expression of the most taunting irony; "no—no—no—such a one there is, as you and I well know, but 'tis not I who am mad—thou art rather crazed thyself, woman; thou hast made one maniac already, wouldst thou make another?"

"I!" said Mrs. Lechmere, without quailing before the ardent look she encountered—"that God who bestows reason, recalls his gift at will;· 'tis not I who exereise such power."

"How sayest thou, Priscilla Lechmere?" cried Ralph, stepping with an inaudible tread so nigh as to grasp, unperceived, her motionless arm with his own wasted fingers; "yes—I will call thee Priscilla, little as thou deservest such a holy name—dost thou deny the power to craze—where, then, is the head of thy boasted race? the proud baronet of Devonshire, the wealthy, and respected, and once happy companion of princes—thy nephew, Lionel Lincoln? Is he in the halls of his fathers?—leading the armies of his king?—ruling and protecting his household?—or is he the tenant of a gloomy cell?—thou knowest he is—thou knowest he is—and, woman, thy vile machinations have placed him there!"

"Who is it that dare thus speak to me?" demanded Mrs. Lechmere, rallying her faculties with a mighty effort, to look down this charge—"if my unhappy nephew is indeed known to thee, thy own knowledge will refute this base accusation——"

"Known to me! I would ask what is hid from me? I have looked at thee, and observed thy conduct, woman, for the life of man; and nothing that thou hast done is hid from me—I tell thee, I know all. Of this sinful woman here, also, I know all—have I not told thee, Abigail Pray, of thy most secret transgressions?"

"Oh! yes—yes; he is indeed acquainted with what I had thought was now concealed from every eye but that of God!" cried Abigail, with superstitious terror.

"Nor of thee am I ignorant, thou miserable widow of John Lechmere; and of Priscilla, too, do I not know all?—"

"All!" again exclaimed Abigail—

"All!" repeated Mrs. Lechmere, in a voice barely audible; when she sunk back in

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her chair, in a state of total insensibility. The breathless interest he felt in all that had yassed, could detain Lionel no longer from rushing to the assistance of his aunt. Abigail Pray, who, it would seem, had been in some measure accustomed to such scenes with her lodger, retained, however, sufficient self-command to anticipate his motions; and, when he had gained the door, he found her already supporting, and making the usual applications to Mrs. Lechmere. It became necessary to divest the sufferer of part of her attire, and Abigail, assuring Lionel of her perfect competency to act by herself, requested bim to withdraw, not only on that account, but because she felt assured that nothing could prove more dangerous to her reviving patient, than his unexpected presence. After lingering a moment, until he witnessed the signs of returning life, Lionel complied with the earnest entreaties of the woman; and, leaving the room, he groped his way to the foot of the ladder, with a determination to ascend to the apartment of Ralph, in order to demand at once an explanation of what he had just seen and heard. He found the old man seated in his little tower, his hand shading his eyes from the feeble light of the miserable candle, and his head drooping upon his bosom, like one in pensive musing. Lionel approached him, without appearing to attract his attention, and was compelled to speak, in order to announce his presence.

"I have received your summons, by Job," he said, "and have obeyed it."

"'Tis well," returned Ralph.

"Perhaps I should add, that I have been an astonished witness of your interview with Mrs. Lechmere, and have heard the bold and unaccountable language you have seen proper to use to that lady."

The old man now raised his head, and Lionel saw the bright rays from his eyes quicken, as he answered—

"You then heard the truth, and witnessed its effects on a guilty conscience."

"I also heard what you call the truth, in connection, as you know, with the names most dear to me."

"Art certain of it, boy?" returned Ralph, looking the other steadily in the face; "has no other become dearer to you, of late, than the authors of your being?—speak, and remember that you answer one of no common knowledge."

"What mean you, sir? is it in nature to love any as we do a parent?"

"Away with this childish simplicity," continued the other, sternly; "the grandchild of that wretched woman below—do you not love her, and can I put trust in thee?"

"What trust is there incompatible with affection for a being so pure as Cecil Dynevor?"

"Ay," murmured the old man in an undertone, "her mother *was* pure, and why may not the child be worthy of its parentage?" He paused, and a long, and, on the part of Lionel, a painful and embarrassing silence succeeded, which was at length broken by Ralph, who said, abruptly—"you were in the field to-day, Major Lincoln."

"Of that you must be certain, as I owe my life to your kind interposition. But why have you braved the danger of an arrest, by trusting your person in the power of the troops? Your presence and activity among the Americans must be known to many in the army besides myself."

"And would they think of searching for their enemies within the streets of Boston, when the hills without are filling with armed men? My residence in this building is known only to the woman below, who dare not betray me, her worthy son, and to you. My movements are secret and sudden, when men least expect them. Danger cannot touch such as I."

"But," said Lionel, hesitating with embarrassment, "ought I to conceal the presence of one whom I know to be inimical to my king?"

"Lionel Lincoln, you overrate your courage," interrupted Ralph, smiling in scorn—"you dare not shed the blood of him who has spared your own;—but enough of this—we understand each other, and one old as I should be a stranger to fear."

"No, no," said a low, solemn voice, from a dark corner of the apartment, where Job had stolen unseen, and was now nestled in security—"you can't frighten Ralph!"

"The boy is a worthy boy, and he knows good from evil; what more is necessary to

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man in this wicked world?" muttered Ralph, in those quick and indistinct tones that characterized his manner.

"Whence came you, fellow, and why did you abandon me so abruptly?" demanded Lionel.

"Job has just been into the market, to see if he couldn't find something that might be good for Nab," returned the lad.

"Think not to impose on me with this nonsense! Is food to be purchased at any hour of the night, though you had the means?"

"Now that is convincing the king's officers don't know everything," said the simpleton, laughing within himself—"here's as good a pound bill, old tenor, as was ever granted by the Bay colony; and meat's no such rarity, that a man who has a pound bill, old tenor, in his pocket, can't go under old Funnel when he pleases, for all their acts of Parliament."

"You have plundered the dead!" cried Lionel, observing that Job exhibited in his hand several pieces of silver, besides the note he had mentioned.

"Don't call Job a thief!" said the lad, with a threatening air; "there's law in the Bay yet, though the people don't use it; and right will be done to all, when the time comes. Job shot a granny, but he's no thief."

"You were then paid for your secret errand, last night, foolish boy; and have been tempted to run into danger by money. Let it be the last time—in future, when you want, come to me for assistance."

"Job won't go of a'r'nds for the king, if he'd give him his golden crown, with all its di'monds and flauntiness, unless Job pleases, for there's no law for it."

Lionel, with a view to appease the irritated lad, now made a few kind and conciliating remarks, but the changeling did not deign to reply, falling back in his corner in a sullen manner, as if he would repair the fatigue of the day by a few moments of sleep. In the meantime, Ralph had sunk into a profound reverie, when the young soldier remembered that the hour was late, and he had yet obtained no explanation of the mysterious charges. He therefore alluded to the subject in a manner which he thought best adapted to obtain the desired intelligence. The instant Lionel mentioned the agitation of his aunt, his companion raised his head again, and a smile like that of fierce exultation lighted the wan face of the old man, who answered, pointing with an emphatic gesture to his own bosom—

"'Twas here, boy, 'twas here—nothing short of the power of conscience, and a knowledge like that of mine, could strike that woman speechless in the presence of anything human."

"But what is this extraordinary knowledge? I am in some degree the natural protector of Mrs. Lechmere; and, independent of my individual interest in your secret, have a right, in her behalf, to require an explanation of such serious allegations."

"In her behalf!" repeated Ralph. "Wait, impetuous young man, until she bids you push the inquiry—it shall then be answered, in a voice of thunder."

"If not in justice to my aged aunt, at least remember your repeated promises to unfold that sad tale of my own domestic sorrows, of which you claim to be the master."

"Ay, of that, and much more, am I in possession," returned the old man, smiling, as if conscious of his knowledge and power; "if you doubt it, descend and ask the miserable tenant of this warehouse—or the guilty widow of John Lechmere."

"Nay, I doubt nothing but my own patience; the moments fly swiftly, and I have yet to learn all I wish to know."

"This is neither the time, nor is it the place, where you are to hear the tale," returned Ralph; "I have already said that we shall meet beyond the colleges for that purpose."

"But after the events of this day, who can tell when it will be in the power of an officer of the crown to visit the colleges in safety?"

"What!" cried the old man, laughing aloud, in the bitterness of his scorn, "has the boy found the strength and the will of the despised colonists so soon? But I pledge to thee my word, that thou shalt yet see the place, and in safety.—Yes, yes, Priscilla Lechmere, thy hour is at hand, and thy doom is sealed forever!"

Lionel again mentioned his aunt, and alluded to the necessity of his soon rejoining

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her, as he already heard footsteps below, which indicated that preparations were making for her departure. But his petitions and remonstrances were now totally unheeded; his aged companion was pacing swiftly up and down his small apartment, muttering incoherent sentences, in which the name of Priscilla was alone audible, and his countenance betraying the inward workings of absorbing and fierce passions. In a few moments more, the shrill voice of Abigail was heard calling upon her son, in a manner which plainly denoted her knowledge that the changeling was concealed somewhere about the building. Job heard her calls repeated, until the tones of her voice became angry and threatening, when he stole slowly from his corner, and moved toward the ladder, with a sunken brow and lingering steps. Lionel now knew not how to act. His aunt was still ignorant of his presence, and he thought if Abigail Pray had wished him to appear, he would in some manner be soon included in the summons. He had also his own secret reasons for wishing his visits to Ralph unknown. Accordingly, he determined to watch the movements below, under the favor of the darkness, and to be governed entirely by circumstances. He took no leave of his companion on departing, for long use had so far accustomed him to the eccentric manner of the old man, that he well knew any attempt to divert his attention from his burning thoughts would be futile at a moment of such intense excitement.

From the head of the ladder, where Lionel took his stand, he saw Mrs. Lechmere, preceded by Job with a lantern, walking, with a firmer step than he could have hoped for, toward the door, and he overheard Abigail cautioning her wilful son to light her visitor to a neighboring corner, where it appeared a conveyance was in waiting. On the threshold, his aunt turned, and, the light from the candle of Abigail falling on her features, Lionel caught a full view of her cold, hard eye, which had regained all its worldly expression, though softened a little by a deeper shade of thought than usual.

"Let the scene of to-night be forgotten, my good Abigail," she said. "Your lodger is a nameless being, who has gleaned some idle tale, and wishes to practise on our credulity to enrich himself. I will consider more of it; but on no account do you hold any further communion with him—I must remove you, my trusty woman; this habitation is unworthy of you, and of your dutiful son, too—I must see you better lodged, my good Abigail, indeed I must."

Lionel could distinguish the s light shudder that passed through the frame of her companion, as she alluded to the doubtful character of Ralph; but, without answering, Abigail held the door open for the departure of her guest. The instant Mrs. Lechmere disappeared, Lionel glided down the ladder, and stood before the astonished woman.

"When I tell you I have heard all that passed to-night," he abruptly said, "you will see the folly of any further attempt at concealment—I now demand so much of your secret as affects the happiness of me or mine."

"No—no—not of me, Major Lincoln," said the terrified female—"not of me, for the love of God, not of me—I have sworn to keep it, and one oath——" Her emotions choked her, and her voice became indistinct.

Lionel regretted his vehemence, and, ashamed to extort a confession from a woman, he attempted to pacify her feelings, promising to require no further communication at that time.

"Go—go"—she said, motioning him to depart, "and I shall be well again—leave me, and then I shall be alone with that terrible old man, and my God!"

Perceiving her earnestness, he reluctantly complied, and, meeting Job on the threshold, he ceased to feel any further uneasiness for her safety.

During his rapid walk to Tremont Street, Major Lincoln thought intently on all he had heard and witnessed. He remembered the communications by which Ralph had attained such a powerful interest in his feelings, and he fancied he could discover a pledge of the truth of the old man's knowledge in the guilt betrayed by the manner of his aunt. From Mrs. Lechmere his thoughts recurred to her lovely grandchild, and for a moment he was perplexed, by endeavoring to explain her contradictory deportment toward himself;—at one time she was warm, frank, and even affectionate; and at another, as in the short and private interview of that very evening,

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cold, constrained, and repulsive. Then, again, he recollected the object which had chiefly induced him to follow his regiment to his native country; and the recollection was attended by that shade of dejection which such reflections never failed to cast across his intelligent features. On reaching the house, he ascertained the same return of Mrs. Lechmere, who had already retired to her room, attended by her lovely relatives. Lionel immediately followed their example; and as the excitement of that memorable and busy day subsided, it was succeeded by a deep sleep, and fell on his senses like the forgetfulness of the dead.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Now let it work: Mischief, thou art afoot:
Take thou what course thou wilt!"
—SHAKESPEARE.

THE alarm of the inroad passed swiftly by the low shores of the Atlantic, and was heard echoing among the rugged mountains west of the rivers, as if borne along on a whirlwind. The male population, between the rolling waters of Massachusetts Bay and the limpid stream of the Connecticut, rose as one man; and as the cry of blood was sounded far inland, the hills and valleys, the highways and footpaths, were seen covered with bands of armed husbandmen, pressing eagerly toward the scene of the war. Within eight-and-forty hours after the fatal meeting at Lexington, it was calculated that more than a hundred thousand men were in arms; and near one-fourth of that number was gathered before the peninsulas of Boston and Charlestown. They who were precluded by distance, and a want of military provisions to support such a concourse, from participating in the more immediate contest, lay by in expectation of the arrival of that moment when their zeal might also be put to severer trials. In short, the sullen quietude, in which the colonies had been slumbering for a year, was suddenly and rudely broken by the events of that day; and the patriotic among the people rose with such a cry of indignation on their lips, that the disaffected, who were no insignificant class in the more southern provinces, were compelled to silence, until the first burst of revolutionary excitement had an opportunity to subside, under the never-failing influence of time and suffering.

Gage, secure in his positions, and supported by a constantly increasing power, as well as the presence of a formidable fleet, looked on the gathering storm with a steady eye, and with that calmness which distinguished the mild benevolence of his private character. Though the attitude and the intentions of the Americans could no longer be mistaken, he listened with reluctant ears to the revengeful advice of his counsellors, and rather strove to appease the tumult, than to attempt crushing it by a force which, though a month before it had been thought equal to the united power of the peaceful colonists, he now prudently deemed no more than competent to protect itself within its watery boundaries. Proclamations were, however, fulminated against the rebels; and such other measures as were thought indispensable to assert the dignity and authority of the crown, were promptly adopted. Of course, these harmless denunciations were disregarded, and all his exhortations to return to an allegiance, which the people still denied had ever been impaired, were lost amid the din of arms, and the popular cries of the time. These appeals of the British general, as well as sundry others, made by the royal governors, who yet held their rule throughout all the provinces, except the one in which the scene of our tale is laid, were answered by the people in humble but manly petitions to the throne for justice; and in loud remonstrances to the Parliament, requiring to be restored to the possession of those rights and immunities, which should be secured to all who enjoyed the protection of their common constitution. Still the power and prerogatives of the prince were deeply respected, and were alluded to in all public documents, with the veneration which was thought due to the sacredness of his character and station. But that biting, though grave sarcasm, which the colonists knew so well how to use, was freely expended on his ministers, who were accused of devising the measures so destructive to the peace of the empire. In this manner passed some weeks after the series of skirmishes which were called the battle of Lexington, from the circumstance of commencing at the

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hamlet of that name, both parties continuing to prepare for a mightier exhibition of their power and daring.

Lionel had by no means been an unconcerned spectator of these preparations. The morning after the return of the detachment, he applied for a command equal to his just expectations. But while he was complimented on the spirit and loyalty he had manifested on the late occasion, it was intimated to the young man that he might be of more service to the cause of his prince by devoting his time to the cultivation of his interest among those powerful colonists with whom his family was allied by blood, or connected by long and close intimacies. It was even submitted to his own judgment whether it would not be well, at some auspicious moment, to trust his person without the defences of the army, in the prosecution of this commendable design. There was so much that was flattering to the self-love, and soothing to the pride of the young soldier, artfully mingled with these ambiguous proposals, that he became content to await the course of events, having, however, secured a promise of obtaining a suitable military command in the case of further hostilities. That such an event was at hand, could not well be concealed from one much less observing than Major Lincoln.

Gage had already abandoned his temporary position in Charlestown, for the sake of procuring additional security by concentrating his force. From the hills of the peninsula of Boston, it was apparent that the colonists were fast assuming the front of men who were resolved to beleaguer the army of the king. Many of the opposite heights were already crowned with hastily-formed works of earth, and a formidable body of these unpractised warriors had set themselves boldly down before the entrance to the isthmus, cutting off all communication with the adjacent country, and occupying the little village of Roxbury, directly before the muzzles of the British guns, with a hardiness that would not have disgraced men much longer tried in the field, and more inured to its dangers.

The surprise created in the army by these appearances of skill and spirit among the hitherto despised Americans, in some measure ceased when the rumor spread itself in their camp that many gentlemen of the provinces, who had served with credit in the forces of the crown, at former periods, were mingled with the people in stations of responsibility and command. Among others Lionel heard the names of Ward and Thomas; men of liberal attainments, and of some experience in arms. Both were regularly commissioned by the congress of the colony as leaders of their forces; and under their orders were numerous regiments duly organized, possessing all the necessary qualifications of soldiers, excepting the two indispensable requisites of discipline and arms. Lionel heard the name of Warren mentioned oftener than any other in the circles of Province-House, and with the sort of bitterness which, even while it bespoke their animosity, betrayed the respect of his enemies. This gentleman, who until the last moment had braved the presence of the royal troops, and fearlessly advocated his principles, while encircled with their bayonets, was now known to have suddenly disappeared from among them, abandoning home, property, and a lucrative profession; and by sharing in the closing scenes of the day of Lexington, to have fairly cast his fortunes on the struggle. But the name which in secret possessed the greatest charm for the ear of the young British soldier, was that of Putnam, a yeoman of the neighboring colony of Connecticut, who, as the uproar of the alarm whirled by him, literally deserted his plough, and mounting a beast from its team, made an early halt, after a forced march of a hundred miles, in the foremost ranks of his countrymen. While the name of this sturdy American was passing in whispers among the veterans who crowded the levees of Gage, a flood of melancholy and tender recollections flashed through the brain of the young man. He remembered the frequent and interesting communications which, in his boyhood, he had held with his own father, before the dark shade had passed across the reason of Sir Lionel, and, in every tale of murderous combats with the savage tenants of the wilds, in each scene of danger and of daring that had distinguished the romantic warfare of the wilderness, and even in stirring and fearful encounters with the bear, the name of this man, or some species of chivalrous

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tained in an enlightened age, and never undeservedly. The great wealth of the family of Lincoln, and the high expectations of its heir, had obtained for the latter a military rank which at that period was rarely enjoyed by any but such as had bought the distinction by long and arduous services. Consequently, many of his equals had shared in those trials of his father, in which the "Lion Heart" of America had been so conspicuous for his deeds. By these grave veterans, who should know him best, the name of Putnam was always mentioned with strong and romantic affection; and when the notable scheme of detaching him, by the promise of office and wealth, from the cause of the colonists was proposed by the cringing counsellors who surrounded the commander-in-chief, it was listened to with a contemptuous incredulity by the former associates of the old partisan, that the result of the plan fully justified. Similar inducements were offered to others among the Americans, whose talents were thought worthy of purchase; but so deep root had the principles of the day taken, that not a man was found to listen to the proposition.

While these subtle experiments were adopted in the room of more energetic measures, troops continued to arrive from England, and, before the end of May, many leaders of renown appeared in the councils of Gage, who now possessed a disposable force of not less than eight thousand bayonets. With the appearance of these reinforcements, the fallen pride of the army began to revive, and the spirits of the haughty young men, who had so recently left the gay parades of their boasted island, were chafed by the reflection that such an army should be cooped within the narrow limits of the peninsula by a band of half-armed husbandmen, destitute alike of the knowledge of war, and of most of its munitions. This feeling was increased by the taunts of the Americans themselves, who now turned the tables on their adversaries, applying, among other sneers, the term of "elbow-room" freely to Burgoyne, one of those chieftains of the royal army, who had boasted unwittingly of the intention of himself and his compeers to widen the limits of the army immediately on their arrival at the scene of the contest. The aspect of things within the British camp began to indicate, however, that their leaders were serious in the intention to extend their possessions, and all eyes were again turned to the heights of Charlestown, the spot most likely to be first occupied.

No military positions could be more happily situated, as respects locality, to support each other, and to extend and weaken the lines of their enemies, than the two opposite peninsulas so often mentioned. The distance between them was but six hundred yards, and the deep and navigable waters, by which they were nearly surrounded, rendered it easy for the royal general to command, at any time, the assistance of the heaviest vessels of the fleet, in defending either place. With these advantages before them, the army gladly heard those orders issued, which, it was well understood, indicated an approaching movement to the opposite shores.

It was now eight weeks since the commencement of hostilities, and the war had been confined to the preparations detailed, with the exception of one or two sharp skirmishes on the islands of the harbor, between the foragers of the army, and small parties of the Americans, in which the latter well maintained their newly acquired reputation for spirit.

With the arrival of the regiments from England gayety had once more visited the town, though such of the inhabitants as were compelled to remain against their inclinations continued to maintain that cold reserve, in their deportment, which effectually repelled all the efforts of the officers to include them in the wanton festivities of the time. There were a few, however, among the colonists, who had been bribed, by offices and emoluments, to desert the good cause of the land; and as some of these had already been rewarded by offices which gave them access to the ear of the royal governor, he was thought to be unduly and unhappily influenced by the pernicious counsels with which they poisoned his mind, and prepared him for acts of injustice and harshness, that both his unbiassed feelings and ordinary opinions would have condemned. A few days succeeding the affair of Lexington, a meeting of the inhabitants had been convened, and a solemn compact was made

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between them and the governor, that such as chose to deliver up their arms might leave the place, while the remainder were promised a suitable protection in their own dwellings. The arms were delivered, but that part of the conditions which related to the removal of the inhabitants was violated under slight and insufficient pretexts. This, and various other causes incidental to military rule, imbittered the feelings of the people, and furnished new causes of complaint; while, on the other hand, hatred was rapidly usurping the place of contempt, in the breasts of those who had been compelled to change their sentiments with respect to a people that they could never love. In this manner, resentment and distrust existed, with all the violence of personality, within the place itself, affording an additional reason to the troops for wishing to extend their limits. Notwithstanding these inauspicious omens of the character of the contest, the native kindness of Gage, and perhaps a desire to rescue a few of his own men from the hands of the colonists, induced him to consent to an exchange of the prisoners made in the inroad; thus establishing, in the outset, a precedent to distinguish the controversy from an ordinary rebellion against the loyal authority of the sovereign. A meeting was held, for this purpose, in the village of Charlestown, at that time unoccupied by either army. At the head of the American deputation appeared Warren, and the old partisan of the wilderness already mentioned, who, by a happy, though not uncommon constitution of temperament, was as forward in deeds of charity as in those of daring. At this interview, several of the veterans of the royal army were present, having passed the strait to hold a last friendly converse with their ancient comrade, who received them with the frankness of a soldier, while he rejected their subtle endeavors to entice him from the banner under which he had enlisted, with a sturdiness as unpretending as it was inflexible.

While these events were occurring at the great scene of the contest, the hum of preparation was to be heard throughout the whole of the wide extent of the colonies. In various places slight acts of hostility were committed, the Americans no longer waiting for the British to be the aggressors, and everywhere such military stores as could be reached were seized, peaceably or by violence, as the case required. The concentration of most of the troops in Boston had, however, left the other colonies comparatively but little to achieve, though, while they still rested, nominally, under the dominion of the crown, they neglected no means within their power to assert their rights in the last extremity.

At Philadelphia "the Congress of the Delegates from the United Colonies," the body that controlled the great movements of a people who now first began to act as a distinct nation, issued their manifestoes, supporting, in a masterly manner, their principles, and proceeded to organize an army that should be as competent to maintain them as circumstances would allow. Gentlemen who had been trained to arms in the service of the king, were invited to resort to their banners, and the remainder of the vacancies were filled by the names of the youthful, the bold and adventurous, who were willing to risk their lives in a cause where even success promised so little personal advantage. At the head of this list of untrained warriors, the congress placed one of their own body, a man already distinguished for his services in the field, and who has since bequeathed to his country the glory of an untarnished name.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Thou shalt meet me at Philippi."—*Julius Cæsar.*

DURING this period of feverish excitement, while the appearance and privations of war existed with so little of its danger or its action, Lionel had not altogether forgotten his personal feelings, in the powerful interest created by the state of public affairs. Early on the morning succeeding the night of the scene between Mrs. Lechmere and the inmates of the warehouse, he had repaired again to the spot, to relieve the intense anxiety of his mind, by seeking a complete explanation of all those mysteries, which had been the principal ligament that bound him to a man little known, except for his singularities.

The effects of the preceding day's battle

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were already visible in the market-place, where, as Lionel passed, he saw few or none of the countrymen, who usually crowded the square at that hour. In fact, the windows of the shops were opened with caution, and men looked out upon the face of the sun, as if doubting of its appearance and warmth, as in seasons of ordinary quiet; jealousy and distrust having completely usurped the place of security within the streets of the town. Notwithstanding the hour, few were in their beds, and those who appeared betrayed by their looks that they had passed the night in watchfulness. Among this number was Abigail Pray, who received her guest in her little tower, surrounded by everything as he had seen it on the past evening, nothing altered, except her own dark eye, which at times looked like a gem of price set in her squalid features, but which now appeared haggard and sunken, participating, more markedly than common, in the general air of misery that pervaded the woman.

"I have intruded at a somewhat unusual hour, Mrs. Pray," said Lionel, as he entered; "but business of the last moment requires that I should see your lodger—I suppose he is above; it will be well to announce my visit."

Abigail shook her head with an air of solemn meaning, as she answered in a subdued voice, "He is gone!"

"Gone!" exclaimed Lionel—"whither, and when?"

"The people seem visited by the wrath of God, sir;" returned the woman—"old and young, the sick and well, are crazy about the shedding of blood; and it's beyond the might of man to say where the torrent will be stayed!"

"But what has this to do with Ralph? where is he? Woman, you are not playing me false?"

"I! heaven forbid that I should ever be false again! and to you least of all God's creatures! No, no, Major Lincoln; the wonderful man, who seems to have lived so long that he can even read our secret thoughts, as I had supposed man could never read them, has left me, and I know not whether he will ever return."

"Ever! you have not driven him by violence from under your miserable roof?"

"My roof is like that of the fowls of the air—'tis the roof of any who are so unfortunate as to need it.—There is no spot on earth, Major Lincoln, that I can call mine—but one day there will be one—yes, yes, there will be a narrow house provided for us all; and God grant that mine may be as quiet as the coffin is said to be! I lie not, Major Lincoln—no, this time I am innocent of deceit—Ralph and Job have gone together, but whither, I know not, unless it be to join the people without the town—they left me as the moon rose, and he gave me a parting and a warning voice, that will ring in my ears until they are deafened by the damps of the grave!"

"Gone to join the Americans, and with Job!" returned Lionel, musing, and without attending to the closing words of Abigail.—"Your boy will purchase peril with this madness, Mrs. Pray, and should be looked to."

"Job is not one of God's accountables, nor is he to be treated like other children," returned the woman. "Ah! Major Lincoln, a healthier, and a stouter, and a finer boy was not to be seen in the Bay province, till the child had reached his fifth year! then, then it was that the judgment of heaven fell on mother and son—sickness made him what you see, a being with the form, but without the reason of man, and I have grown the wretch I am. But it has all been foretold, and warnings enough have I had of it all! for is it not said, that *He* 'will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children until the third and fourth generation?' Thank God, my sorrows and sins will end with Job, for there never can be a third to suffer!"

"If," said Lionel, "there be any sin which lies heavy at your heart, every consideration, whether of justice or repentance, should induce you to confess your errors to those whose happiness may be affected by the knowledge, if any such there be."

The anxious eye of the woman raised itself to meet the look of the young man; but, quailing before the piercing gaze it encountered, she quickly turned it upon the litter and confusion of her disordered apartment. Lionel waited some time for a reply, but finding that she remained obstinately silent, he continued—

"From what has already passed, you must

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be conscious that I have good reason to believe that my feelings are deeply concerned in your secret; make, then, your confession of the guilt which seems to bear you down so heavily; and in return for the confidence, I promise you my forgiveness and protection."

As Lionel pressed thus directly the point so near his heart, the woman shrunk away from her situation near him, and her countenance lost, as he proceeded, its remarkable expression of compunction, in a forced look of deep surprise, that showed she was no novice in dissimulation, whatever might be the occasional warnings of her conscience.

"Guilt!" she repeated, in a slow and tremulous voice; "we are all guilty, and would be lost creatures, but for the blood of the Mediator."

"Most true; but you have spoken of crimes that infringe the laws of man, as well as those of God."

"I! Major Lincoln—I a disorderly lawbreaker?" exclaimed Abigail, affecting to busy herself in arranging her apartment—"it is not such as I, that have leisure or courage to break the laws! Major Lincoln is trying a poor lone woman, to make his jokes with the gentlemen of his mess this evening—'tis certain we all of us have our burdens of guilt to answer for—surely Major Lincoln couldn't have heard minister Hunt preach his sermon, the last Sabbath, on the sins of the town!"

Lionel colored highly at the artful imputation of the woman, that he was practising on her sex and unprotected situation; and, greatly provoked, in secret, at her duplicity, he became more guarded in his language, endeavoring to lead her on, by kindness and soothing, to the desired communications. But all his ingenuity was met by more than equal abilities on the part of Abigail, from whom he only obtained expressions of surprise, that he could have mistaken her language for more than the usual acknowledgment of errors that are admitted to be common to our lost nature. In this particular, the woman was in no respect singular; the greater number of those, who are loudest in their confessions of and denunciations on the abandoned nature of our hearts, commonly resenting, in the deepest manner, the imputation of individual offences. The more earnest and pressing his inquiries became, the more wary she grew, until, disgusted with her pertinacity, and secretly suspecting her of foul play with her lodger, he left the house in anger, determining to keep a close eye on her movements, and, at a suitable moment, to strike such a blow as should bring her not only to confession, but to shame.

Under the influence of this momentary resentment, and unable to avoid harboring the most unpleasant suspicions of his aunt, the young man determined that very morning to withdraw himself entirely, as a guest, from her dwelling. Mrs. Lechmere, who, if she knew at all that Lionel had been a witness of her intercourse with Ralph, must have received the intelligence from Abigail, received him, at breakfast, with a manner that betrayed no such consciousness. She listened to his excuses for removing, with evident concern; and more than once, as Lionel spoke of the probable nature of his future life, now that hostilities had commenced—the additional trouble his presence would occasion to one of her habits and years—of his great concern in her behalf—and, in short, of all that he could devise in the way of apology for the step, he saw her eyes turned anxiously on Cecil with an expression which, at another time, might have led him to distrust the motives of her hospitality. The young lady, herself, however, evidently heard the proposal with great satisfaction, and, when her grandmother appealed to her opinion, whether he had urged a single good reason for the measure, she answered with a vivacity that had been a stranger to her manner of late—

"Certainly, my dear grandmamma—the best of all reasons—his inclinations. Major Lincoln tires of us, and of our humdrum habits, and—and in my eyes, true politeness requires, that we should suffer him to leave us for his barracks, without a word of remonstrance."

"My motive must be greatly mistaken, if a desire to leave you——"

"Oh! sir, the explanation is not required. You have urged so many reasons, cousin Lionel, that the true and moving motive is yet kept behind the curtain. It must and can be no other than *ennui*."

"Then I will remain," said Lionel; "for

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anything is better than to be suspected of insensibility."

Cecil looked both gratified and disappointed—she played with her spoon a moment in embarrassment, bit her beautiful lip with vexation, and then said, in a more friendly tone—

"I must then exonerate you from the imputation. Go to your own quarters, if it be agreeable, and we will believe your incomprehensible reasons for the change—besides, as a kinsman, we shall see you every day, you know."

Lionel had now no longer any excuse for not abiding by his avowed determination; and, notwithstanding Mrs. Lechmere parted from her interesting nephew with an exhibition of reluctance that was in singular contrast with her usually cold and formal manner, the desired removal was made in the course of that very morning.

When this change was accomplished, week after week slipped by, in the manner related in the preceding chapter, during which the reinforcements continued to arrive, and general after general appeared in the place to support the unenterprising Gage in the conduct of the war. The timid amongst the colonists were appalled as they heard the long list of proud and boasted names recounted. There was Howe, a man sprung from a noble race, long known for their deeds in arms, and whose chief had already shed his blood on the soil of America—Clinton, another cadet of an illustrious house, better known for his personal intrepidity and domestic kindness, than for the rough qualities of the warrior—and the elegant and accomplished Burgoyne, who had already purchased a name in the fields of Portugal and Germany, which he was destined soon to lose in the wilds of America. In addition to these might be mentioned Pigot, Grant, Robertson, and the heir of Northumberland, each of whom led a brigade in the cause of his prince; besides a host of men of lesser note, who had passed their youth in arms, and were now about to bring their experience to the field, in opposition to the untrained husbandmen of the plains of New England. As if this list were not sufficient to overwhelm their inexperienced adversaries, the pride of arms had gathered many of the young among the noble and chivalric in the British empire, to the point on which all eyes were turned; amongst whom the one who afterward added the fairest wreath to the laurels of his ancestors was the joint heir of Hastings and Moira, the gallant, but, as yet, untried boy of Rawdon. Amongst such companions, many of whom had been his associates in England, the hours of Lionel passed swiftly by, leaving him but little leisure to meditate on those causes which had brought him also to the scene of contention.

One warm evening, toward the middle of June, Lionel became a witness of the following scene, through the open doors which communicated between his private apartment and the room which Polwarth had dedicated to what he called "the knowing mess." M'Fuse was seated at a table, with a ludicrous air of magisterial authority, while Polwarth held a station at his side, which appeared to partake of the double duties of a judge and a scribe. Before this formidable tribunal Seth Sage was arraigned, as it would seem, to answer for certain offences alleged to have been committed in the field of battle. Ignorant that his landlord had not received the benefit of the late exchange, and curious to know what all the suppressed roguery he could detect in the demure countenances of his friends might signify, Lionel dropped his pen, and listened to the succeeding dialogue.

"Now answer to your offences, thou silly fellow, with a wise name," M'Fuse commenced, in a voice that did not fail, by its harsh cadences, to create some of that awe, which, by the expression of the speaker's eye, it would seem he labored to produce—"speak out with the freedom of a man, and the compunctions of a Christian, if you have them. Why should I not send you at once to Ireland, that ye may get your deserts on three pieces of timber, the one being laid cross-wise for the sake of convenience? If you have a contrary reason, bestow it without delay, for the love you bear your own angular daiformities."

The wags did not altogether fail in their object, Seth betraying a good deal more uneasiness than it was usual for the man to exhibit even in situations of uncommon peril. After clearing his throat, and looking about him, to gather from the eyes of the spectators which way their sympathies inclined, he

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answered with a very commendable fortitude—

"Because it's ag'in all law."

"Have done with your interminable perplexities of the law," cried M'Fuse, "and do not bother honest gentlemen with its knavery, as if they were no more than so many proctors in big wigs! 'tis the gospel you should be thinking of, you godless reprobate, on account of that final end you will yet make, one day, in a most indecent hurry."

"To your purpose, Mac," interrupted Polwarth, who perceived that the erratic feelings of his friend were beginning already to lead him from the desired point; "or I will propound the matter myself, in a style that would do credit to a mandamus counsellor."

"The mandamuses are all ag'in the charter, and the law too," continued Seth, whose courage increased as the dialogue bore more directly upon his political principles—"and to my mind it's quite convincing, that if ministers calculate largely on upholding them, there will be great disturbances, if not a proper fight in the land; for the whole country is in a blaze!"

"Disturbances, thou immovable iniquity! thou quiet assassin!" roared M'Fuse; "do ye not call a light of a day a disturbance?—or do ye tarm skulking behind fences, and laying the muzzle of a musket on the head of Job Pray, and the breech on a mullein-stalk, while ye draw upon a fellow-creature, a commendable method of fighting? Now answer me to the truth, and disdain all lying, as ye would 'ating anything but cod on a Saturday, who were the two men that fired into my very countenance, from the unfortunate situation among the mulleins that I have detailed to you?"

"Pardon me, Captain M'Fuse," said Polwarth, "if I say that your zeal and indignation run ahead of your discretion. If we alarm the prisoner in this manner, we may defeat the ends of justice. Besides, sir, there is a reflection contained in your language, to which I must dissent. A real *dumb* is not to be despised, especially when served up in wrapper, and between two coarser fish, to preserve the steam—I have had my private meditations on the subject of getting up a Saturday's club, in order to enjoy the bounty of the Bay, and for improving the cookery of the cod!"*

"And let me tell you, Captain Polwarth," returned the grenadier, cocking his eye fiercely at the other, "that your epicurean propensities lead you to the verge of cannibalism; for sure it may be called *that*, when you speak of 'ating, while the life of a fellow-cr'ature is under a discussion for its termination——"

"I conclude," interrupted Seth, who was greatly averse to all quarrelling, and who thought he saw the symptoms of a breach between his judges, "the captain wishes to know who the two men were that fired on him a short time before he got the hit in the shoulder?"

"A short time, ye marvellous hypocrite!—'twas as quick as pop and slap could make it."

"Perhaps there might be some mistake, for a great many of the troops were much disguised——"

"Do ye insinuate that I got drunk before the enemies of my king?" roared the grenadier.—"Hark ye, Master Sage; I ask you in a genteel way, who the two men were that fired on me, in the manner detailed; and remember that a man may tire of putting questions which are never answered."

"Why," returned Seth, who, however expert at prevarication, eschewed, with religious horror, a direct lie—"I pretty much conclude that they—the captain is sure the place he means was just beyond Menotomy?"

"As sure as men can be," said Polwarth, "who possess the use of their eyes."

"Then Captain Polwarth can give testimony to the fact?"

"I believe Major Lincoln's horse carries a small bit of your lead to this moment, Master Sage."

Seth yielded to this accumulation of evi-

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*Note.—It may be a fit matter of inquiry for the antiquarian, to learn whether the captain ever put his project in execution; and, if so, whether he has not the merit of founding that famous association, which, to this hour, maintains the Catholic custom of the east, by feasting on the last day of the week on the staple of New England; and which is said to assemble regularly, with much good-fellowship, around more good wine than is ever encountered at any other board in the known world.

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dence against him; and knowing, moreover, that the grenadier had literally made him a prisoner in the act of renewing his fire, he sagaciously determined to make a merit of necessity, and candidly to acknowledge his agency in inflicting the wounds. The utmost, however, that his cautious habits would permit him to say, was—

"Seeing there can't well be any mistake, I seem to think the two men were chiefly Job and I."

"Chaifly, you lath of uncertainty!" exclaimed M'Fuse; "if there was any chaif in that cowardly assassination of wounding a Christian, and of also hurting a horse—which, though nothing but a dumb baste, has better blood than runs in your own beggarly veins—'twas your own ugly proportions. But I rejoice that you have come to the confessional! I can now see you hung with felicity—if you have anything to say, urge it at once, why I should not embark you for Ireland by the first vessel, in a letter to my lord-lieutenant, with a request that he'll give you an early procession, and a dacent funeral."

Seth belonged to a class of his countrymen, amongst whom, while there was a superabundance of ingenuity, there was literally no joke. Deceived by the appearance of anger, which had in reality blended with the assumed manner of the grenadier, as he dwelt upon the irritating subject of his own injuries, the belief of the prisoner in the sacred protection of the laws became much shaken, and he began to reflect very seriously on the insecurity of the times, as well as on the despotic nature of the military power. The little humor he had inherited from his puritan ancestors was, though exceedingly quaint, altogether after a different fashion from the off-hand, blundering wit of the Irishman; and that manner which he did not possess, he could not entirely comprehend, so that, as far as a very visible alarm furthered the views of the two conspirators, they were quite successful. Polwarth now took pity on his evident embarrassment, and observed, with a careless manner—

"Perhaps I can make a proposal, by which Mr. Sage may redeem his neck from the halter, and at the same time essentially serve an old friend."

"Hear ye that, thou confounder of men and bastes!" cried M'Fuse—"down on your knees, and thank Mr. Paiter Polwarth for the charity of his insinuation."

Seth was not displeased to hear such amicable intentions announced; but, habitually cautious in all bargaining, he suppressed the exhibition of his satisfaction, and said, with an air of deliberation that would have done credit to the keenest trader in King Street—that "he should like to hear the terms of the agreement, before he gave his conclusion."

"They are simply these," returned Polwarth—"you shall receive your passports and freedom to-night, on condition that you sign this bond, whereby you will become obliged to supply our mess, as usual, during the time the place is invested, with certain articles of food and nourishment, as herein set forth, and according to the prices mentioned, which the veriest Jew in Duke's Place would pronounce to be liberal. Here; take the instrument, and 'read, and mark,' in order that we may 'inwardly digest.'"

Seth took the paper and gave it that manner of investigation that he was wont to bestow on everything which affected his pecuniary interests. He objected to the price of every article, all of which were altered in compliance with his obstinate resistance; and he moreover insisted, that a clause should be inserted to exonerate him from the penalty, provided the intercourse should be prohibited by the authorities of the colony; after which he continued—

"If the captain will agree to take charge of the things, and become liable, I will conclude to make the trade."

"Here is a fellow who wants boot in a bargain for his life!" cried the grenadier; "but we will humor his covetous inclinations, Polly, and take charge of the chattels. Captain Polwarth and myself pledge our words to their safe-keeping. Let me run my eyes over the articles," continued the grenadier, looking very gravely at the several covenants of the bond—"faith, Paiter, you have bargained for a goodly larder! Baif, mutton, pigs, turnips, potatoes, melons, and other fruits—there's a blunder, now, that would keep an English mess on a grin for a month, if an Irishman had made it! as if a melon was a fruit, and a potato was not! The devil a

word do I see that you have said about a mouthful, except aitables, either! Here, fellow, clap your learning to it, and I'll warrant you we yet get a meal out of it, in some manner or other."

"Wouldn't it be as well to put the last agreement in the writings too," said Seth, "in case of accidents?"

"Hear how a knave halters himself!" cried M'Fuse; "he has the individual honor of two captains of foot, and is willing to exchange it for their joint bond! The request is too raisonable to be denied, Polly, and we should be guilty of pecuniary suicide to reject it; so place a small article at the bottom, explanatory of the mistake the gentleman has fallen into."

Polwarth did not hesitate to comply, and in a very few minutes everything was arranged to the perfect satisfaction of the parties; the two soldiers felicitating themselves on the success of a scheme which seemed to avert the principal evils of the leaguer from their own mess; and Seth finding no difficulty in complying with an agreement which was likely to prove so profitable, however much he doubted its validity in a court of justice. The prisoner was now declared at liberty, and was advised to make his way out of the place with as little noise as possible, and under favor of the pass he held. Seth gave the bond a last and most attentive perusal, and then departed, well contented to abide by its conditions, and not a little pleased to escape from the grenadier, the expression of whose half-comic, half-serious eye occasioned him more perplexity than any other subject which had ever before occupied his astuteness. After the disappearance of the prisoner, the two worthies repaired to their nightly banquet, laughing heartily at the success of their notable invention.

Lionel suffered Seth to pass from the room, without speaking; but, as the man left his own abode with a lingering and doubtful step, the young soldier followed him into the street, without communicating to any one that he had witnessed what had passed, with the laudable intention of adding his own personal pledge for the security of the household goods in question. He, however, found it no easy achievement to equal the speed of a man who had just escaped from a long confinement, and who now appeared inclined to indulge his limbs freely in the pleasure of an unlimited exercise. The velocity of Seth continued unabated, until he had conducted Lionel far into the lower parts of the town, where the latter perceived him to encounter a man, with whom he turned suddenly under an arch which led into a dark and narrow court. Lionel instantly increased his speed, and as he entered beneath the passage, he caught a glimpse of the lank figure of the object of his pursuit, gliding through the opposite entrance to the court, and, at the same moment, he encountered the man who had apparently induced the deviation in his route. As Lionel stepped a little on one side, the light of a lamp fell full on the form of the other, and he recognized the person of the active leader of the caucus (as the political meeting he had attended was called), though so disguised and muffled, that, but for the accidental opening of the folds of his cloak, the unknown might have passed his nearest friend without discovery.

"We meet again!" exclaimed Lionel, in the quickness of surprise; "though it would seem that the sun is never to shine on our interviews."

The stranger started, and betrayed an evident wish to continue his walk, as though the other had mistaken his person; then, as if suddenly recollecting himself, he turned and approached Lionel, with easy dignity, and answered—

"The third time is said to contain the charm! I am happy to find that I meet Major Lincoln unharmed, after the dangers he has so lately encountered."

"The dangers have probably been exaggerated by those who wish ill to the cause of our master," returned Lionel, coldly.

There was a calm but proud smile on the face of the stranger, as he replied—

"I shall not dispute the information of one who bore so conspicuous a part in the deeds of that day—still you will remember, though the march to Lexington was, like our own accidental rencontres, in the dark, that a bright sun shone upon the retreat, and nothing has been hid."

"Nothing need be concealed," replied Lionel, nettled by the proud composure of the other—"unless, indeed, the man I ad-

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dress is afraid to walk the streets of Boston in open day."

"The man you address, Major Lincoln," said the stranger, advancing in his warmth a step nearer to Lionel, "has dared to walk the streets of Boston both by day and by night, when the bullies of him you call your master have strutted their hour in the security of peace; and, now a nation is up to humble their pretensions, shall he shrink from treading his native soil when he will?"

"This is bold language from an enemy within a British camp! Ask yourself what course my duty requires of me."

"That is a question which lies between Major Lincoln and his conscience," returned the stranger—"though," he added, after a momentary pause, and in a milder tone, as if he recollected the danger of his situation—"the gentlemen of his name and lineage were not apt to be informers, when they dwelt in the land of their birth."

"Neither is their descendant. But let this be the last of our interviews, until we can meet as friends, or, as enemies should, where we may discuss these topics at the points of our weapons."

"Amen," said the stranger, seizing the hand of the young man, and pressing it with the warmth of a generous emulation—"that hour may not be far distant, and may God smile only on the just cause."

Without uttering more, he drew the folds of his dress more closely around his form, and walked so swiftly away that Lionel, had he possessed the inclination, could not have found an opportunity to arrest his progress. As all expectation of overtaking Seth was now lost, the young soldier returned slowly and thoughtfully towards his quarters.

The two or three succeeding days were distinguished by an appearance of more than usual preparation among the troops, and it became known that officers of rank had closely reconnoitred the grounds of the opposite peninsula. Lionel patiently awaited the progress of events; but as the probability of active service increased, his wishes to make another effort to probe the secret of the tenant of the warehouse revived, and he took his way towards the Dock Square, with that object, on the night of the fourth day from the preceding interview with the stranger. It was long after the tattoo had laid the town in that deep quiet, which follows the bustle of a garrison; and, as he passed along, he saw none but the sentinels pacing their short limits, or an occasional officer, returning at that late hour from his revels or his duty. The windows of the warehouse were dark, and its inhabitants, if any it had, were wrapped in deep sleep. Restless and excited, Lionel pursued his walk through the narrow and gloomy streets of the North-End, until he unexpectedly found himself issuing upon the open space that is tenanted by the dead, on Copp's-Hill. On this eminence the English general had caused a battery of heavy cannon to be raised, and Lionel, unwilling to encounter the challenge of the sentinels, inclining a little to one side, proceeded to the brow of the hill, and, seating himself on a stone, began to muse deeply on his own fortunes, and the situation of the country.

The night was obscure, but the thin vapors which appeared to overhang the place opened at times, when a faint starlight fell from the heavens, and rendered the black hulls of the vessels of war, that lay moored before the town, and the faint outlines of the opposite shores, dimly visible. The stillness of midnight rested on the scene, and when the loud calls of "all's well" ascended from the ships and batteries, the momentary cry was succeeded by a quiet as deep as if the universe slumbered under this assurance of safety. At such an instant, when even the light breathings of the night-air were audible, the sound of rippling waters, like that occasioned by raising a paddle with extreme caution, was borne to the ear of the young soldier. He listened intently, and then, bending his eyes in the direction of the faint sounds, he saw a small canoe gliding along the surface of the water, and soon shoot upon the gravelly shore, at the foot of the hill, with a motion so easy and uniform as scarcely to curl a wave on the land. Curious to know who could be moving about the harbor at this hour, in such a secret manner, Lionel was in the act of rising to descend, when he saw the dim figure of a man land from the boat, and climb the hill, directly in a line with his own position. Suppressing even the sounds of his breath, and

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drawing his body back within the deep shadow cast from a point of the hill, a little above him, Lionel waited until the figure had approached within ten feet of him, when it stopped, and appeared, like himself, to be endeavoring to suppress all other sounds and feelings in the absorbing act of deep attention. The young soldier loosened his sword in its sheath, before he said—

"We have chosen a private spot, and a secret hour, sir, for our meditations!"

Had the figure possessed the impalpable nature of an immaterial being, it could not have received this remark, so startling from its suddenness, with greater apathy than did the man to whom it was addressed. He turned slowly toward the speaker, and seemed to look at him earnestly, before he answered, in a low, menacing voice—

"There's a granny on the hill, with a gun and baggonet, walking among the cannon, and if he hears people talking down here, he'll make them prisoners, though one of them should be Major Lincoln."

"Ha! Job," said Lionel—"and is it you I meet prowling about like a thief at night?—on what errand of mischief have you been sent this time?"

"If Job's a thief for coming to see the graves on Copp's," returned the lad sullenly, "there's two of them."

"Well answered, boy!" said Lionel, with a smile; "but I repeat, on what errand have you returned to the town at this unseasonable and suspicious hour?"

"Job loves to come up among the graves, before the cocks crow; they say the dead walk when living men sleep."

"And would you hold communion with the dead, then?"

"'Tis sinful to ask them many questions, and such as you do put should be made in the Holy Name," returned the lad, in a tone so solemn, that, connected with the place and the scene, it caused the blood of Lionel to thrill—"but Job loves to be near them, to use him to the damps, ag'in the time he shall be called to walk himself in a sheet at midnight."

"Hush!" said Lionel—"what noise is that?"

Job stood a moment, listening as intently as his companion, before he answered—

"There's no noise but the moaning of the wind in the bay, or the sea tumbling on the beaches of the islands."

"'Tis neither," said Lionel; "I heard the low hum of a hundred voices, or my ears have played me falsely."

"Maybe the spirits speak to each other," said the lad—"they say their voices are like the rushing winds."

Lionel passed his hand across his brow, and endeavored to recover the tone of his mind, which had been strangely disordered by the solemn manner of his companion, and walked slowly from the spot, closely attended by the silent changeling. He did not stop until he had reached the inner angle of the wall that enclosed the field of the dead, when he paused, and, leaning on the fence, again listened intently.

"Boy, I know not how your silly conversation may have warped my brain," he said, "but there are surely strange and unearthly sounds lingering about this place, to-night! By heavens! there is another rush of voices, as if the air above the water were filled with living beings; and then, again, I think I hear a noise as if heavy weights were falling to the earth!"

"Ay," said Job, "'tis the clods on the coffins, the dead are going into their graves ag'in, and 'tis time that we should leave them their own grounds."

Lionel hesitated no longer, but he rather ran than walked from the spot, with a secret horror that, at another moment, he would have blushed to acknowledge; nor did he perceive that he was still attended by Job, until he had descended some distance down Lynn Street. Here he was addressed by his companion, in his usually quiet and unmeaning tones—

"There's the house that the governor built, who went down into the sea for money!" he said—"he was a poor boy once, like Job, and now they say his grandson is a great lord, and the king knighted the grand'ther too. It's pretty much the same thing whether a man gets his money out of the sea or out of the earth; the king will make him a lord for it."

"You hold the favors of royalty cheap, fellow," returned Lionel, glancing his eye carelessly at the "Phipps' House," as he

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passed—"you forget that I am to be some day one of your despised knights!"

"I know it," said Job; "and you come from America too—it seems to me that all the poor boys go from America to the king to be great lords, and all the sons of the great lords come to America to be made poor boys—Nab says Job is the son of a great lord too!"

"Then Nab is as great a fool as her child," said Lionel; "but, boy, I would see your mother in the morning, and I expect you to let me know at what hour I may visit her."

Job did not answer, and Lionel, on turning his head, perceived that he was suddenly deserted by the changeling, who was already gliding back towards his favorite haunt among the graves. Vexed at the wild humors of the lad, Lionel hastened to his quarters, and threw himself in his bed, though he heard the loud cries of "all's well," again and again, before the strange fantasies, which continued to cross his mind, would permit him to obtain the rest he sought.

CHAPTER XV.

"We are finer gentlemen, no doubt, than the plain farmers we are about to encounter. Our hats carry a smarter cock, our swords hang more gracefully by our sides, and we make an easier figure in a ball-room; but let it be remembered, that the most finished macaroni amongst us would pass for an arrant clown at Pekin."—*Letter from a Veteran Officer, etc.*

When the heavy sleep of morning fell upon his senses, visions of the past and future mingled with wild confusion in the dreams of the youthful soldier. The form of his father stood before him, as he had known it in his childhood, fair in the proportions and vigor of manhood, regarding him with those eyes of benignant, but melancholy affection, which characterized their expression after he had become the sole joy of his widowed parent. While his heart was warming at the sight, the figure melted away, and was succeeded by fantastic phantoms, which appeared to dance among the graves on Copp's, led along in those gambols, which partook of the ghastly horrors of the dead, by Job Pray, who glided among the tombs like a being of another world. Sudden and loud thunder then burst upon them, and the shadows fled into their secret places, from whence he could see, ever and anon, some glassy eyes and spectral faces, peering out upon him, as if conscious of the power they possessed to chill the blood of the living. His visions now became painfully distinct, and his sleep was oppressed with their vividness, when his senses burst their unnatural bonds, and he awoke. The air of morning was breathing through his open curtains, and the light of day had already shed itself upon the dusky roofs of the town. Lionel arose from his bed, and paced his chamber several times, in a vain effort to shake off the images that had haunted his slumbers, when the sounds which broke upon the stillness of the air became too plain to be longer mistaken by a practised ear.

"Ha!" he muttered to himself, "I have been dreaming but by halves—these are the sounds of no fancied tempest, but cannon, speaking most plainly to the soldier!"

He opened his window, and looked out upon the surrounding scene. The roar of artillery was now quick and heavy, and Lionel bent his eyes about him to discover the cause of this unusual occurrence. It had been the policy of Gage to await the arrival of his reinforcements, before he struck a blow, which was intended to be decisive; and the Americans were well known to be too scantily supplied with the munitions of war, to waste a single charge of powder in any of the vain attacks of modern sieges. A knowledge of these facts gave an additional interest to the curiosity with which Major Lincoln endeavored to penetrate the mystery of so singular a disturbance. Window after window in the adjacent buildings soon exhibited, like his own, its wondering and alarmed spectator. Here and there a half-dressed soldier, or a busy townsman, was seen hurrying along the silent streets, with steps that denoted the eagerness of his curiosity. Women began to rush wildly from their dwellings, and then, as the sounds broke on their ears with tenfold heaviness in the open air, they shrunk back into their habitations in pallid dismay. Lionel called to three or four of the men, as they hurried by; but, turning their eyes wildly towards his window, they passed on without answering, as if the

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emergency were too pressing to admit of speech. Finding his repeated inquiries fruitless, he hastily dressed himself, and descended to the street. As he left his own door, a half-clad artillerist hurried past him, adjusting his garments with one hand, and bearing in the other some of the lesser implements of the particular corps in which he served.

"What means the firing, sergeant," demanded Lionel, "and whither do you hasten with those fuses?"

"The rebels, your honor, the rebels!" returned the soldier, looking back to speak, without ceasing his speed; "and I go to my guns!"

"The rebels!" repeated Lionel—"what can we have to fear from a mob of countrymen, in such a position—that fellow has slept from his post, and apprehensions for himself mingle with this zeal for his king!"

The towns-people now began to pour from their dwellings in scores; and Lionel imitated their example, and took his course towards the adjacent height of Beacon-Hill. He toiled his way up the steep ascent, in company with twenty more, without exchanging a syllable with men who appeared as much astonished as himself at this early interruption of their slumbers, and in a few minutes he stood on the little grassy platform, surrounded by a hundred interested gazers. The sun had just lifted the thin veil of mist from the bosom of the waters, and the eye was permitted to range over a wide field beneath the light vapor. Several vessels were moored in the channels of the Charles and Mystic, to cover the northern approaches of the place; and as he beheld the column of white smoke that was wreathing about the masts of a frigate among them, Lionel was no longer at a loss to comprehend whence the firing proceeded. While he was yet gazing, uncertain of the reasons which demanded this show of war, immense fields of smoke burst from the side of a ship of the line, who also opened her deep-mouthed cannon, and presently her example was followed by several floating batteries, and lighter vessels, until the wide amphitheatre of hills that encircled Boston was filled with the echoes of a hundred pieces of artillery.

"What can it mean, sir?" exclaimed a young officer of his own regiment, addressing Major Lincoln—"the sailors are in downright earnest, and they scale their guns with shot, I know, by the rattling of the reports!"

"I can boast of a vision no better than your own," returned Lionel; "for no enemy can I see. As the guns seem pointed at the opposite peninsula, it is probable a party of the Americans are attempting to destroy the grass which lies newly mown in the meadows."

The young officer was in the act of assenting to this conjecture, when a voice was heard above their heads, shouting—

"There goes a gun from Copp's! They needn't think to frighten the people with their rake-helly noises; let them blaze away till the dead get out of their graves—the Bay-men will keep the hill!"

Every eye was immediately turned upward, and the wondering and amused spectators discovered Job Pray, seated in the grate of the beacon, his countenance, usually so vacant, gleaming with exultation, while he continued waving his hat high in air, as gun after gun was added to the uproar of the cannonade.

"How now, fellow!" exclaimed Lionel: "what see you? and where are the Bay-men of whom you speak?"

"Where?" returned the simpleton, clapping his hands with childish delight—"why, where they came at dark midnight, and where they'll stand at open noonday! The Bay-men can look into the windows of old Funnel at last, and now let the reg'lars come on, and they'll teach the godless murderers the law!"

Lionel, a little irritated with the bold language of Job, called to him in an angry voice—

"Come down from that perch, fellow, and explain yourself, or this grenadier shall lift you from your seat, and transfer you to the post for a little of that wholesome correction which you need."

"You promised that the grannies should never flog Job ag'in," said the changeling, crouching down in the grate, whence he looked out at his threatened chastiser with a lowering and sullen eye—"and Job agreed to run your a'r'nds, and not take any of the king's crowns in pay."

"Come down, then, this instant, and I will remember the compact."

Comforted by this assurance, which was

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made in a more friendly tone, Job threw himself carelessly from his iron seat, and clinging to the post, he slid swiftly to the earth, where Major Lincoln immediately arrested him by the arm, and demanded—

"Where are those Bay-men, I once more ask?"

"There!" repeated Job, pointing over the low roofs of the town, in the direction of the opposite peninsula. "They dug their cellar on Breed's, and now they are fixing the underpinnin', and next you'll see what a raising they'll invite the people to!"

The instant the spot was named, all those eyes which had hitherto gazed at the vessels themselves, instead of searching for the object of their hostility, were turned on the green eminence which rose a little to the right of the village of Charlestown, and every doubt was at once removed by the discovery. The high, conical summit of Bunker Hill lay naked and unoccupied, as on the preceding day; but on the extremity of a more humble ridge, which extended within a short distance of the water, a low bank of earth had been thrown up, for purposes which no military eye could mistake. This redoubt, small and inartificial as it was, commanded by its position the whole of the inner harbor of Boston, and even endangered, in some measure, the occupants of the town itself. It was the sudden appearance of this magical mound, as the mists of the morning had dispersed, which roused the slumbering seamen; and it had already become the target of all the guns of the shipping in the bay. Amazement at the temerity of their countrymen held the townsmen silent, while Major Lincoln, and the few officers who stood nigh him, saw, at a glance, that this step on the part of their adversaries would bring the affairs of the leaguer to an instant crisis. In vain they turned their wondering looks on the neighboring eminence, and around the different points of the peninsula, in quest of those places of support with which soldiers generally entrench their defences. The husbandmen opposed to them had seized upon the point best calculated to annoy their foes, without regard to the consequences; and in a few short hours, favored by the mantle of night, had thrown up their work with a dexterity that was only exceeded by their boldness. The truth flashed across the brain of Major Lincoln with his first glance, and he felt his cheeks glow as he remembered the low and indistinct murmurs, which the night-air had wafted to his ears, and those inexplicable fancies, which had even continued to haunt him till dispersed by truth and the light of day. Motioning to Job to follow, he left the hill with a hurried step, and when they gained the Common, he turned, and said, sternly, to his companion—

"Fellow, you have been privy to this midnight work!"

"Job has enough to do in the day, without laboring in the night, when none but the dead are out of their places of rest," returned the lad, with a look of mental imbecility, which immediately disarmed the resentment of the other.

Lionel smiled as he again remembered his own weakness, and repeated to himself—

"The dead! ay, these are the works of the living; and bold men are they who have dared to do the deed. But tell me, Job—for 'tis in vain to attempt deceiving me any longer—what number of Americans did you leave on the hill, when you crossed the Charles to visit the graves on Copp's, the past night?"

"Both hills were crowded," returned the other—"Breed's with the people, and Copp's with the ghosts—Job believes the dead rose to see their children digging so nigh them!"

"'Tis probable," said Lionel, who believed it wisest to humor the wild conceits of the lad, in order to disarm his cunning; "but, though the dead are invisible, the living may be counted."

"Job did count five hundred men, marching over the nose of Bunker, by starlight, with their picks and spades; and then he stopped, for he forgot whether seven or eight hundred came next."

"And after you had ceased to count, did many others pass?"

"The Bay colony isn't so poorly off for men, that it can't muster a thousand at a raising."

"But you had a master-workman on the occasion; was it the wolf-hunter of Connecticut?"

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"There is no occasion to go from the

province to find a workman to lay out a cellar! Dickey Gridley is a Boston boy!"

"Ah! he is the chief! we can have nothing to fear then, since the Connecticut woodsman is not at their head!"

"Do you think old Prescott, of Pepperel, will quit the hill while he has a kernel of powder to burn?—no, no, Major Lincoln, Ralph himself an't a stouter warrior; and you can't frighten Ralph!"

"But if they fire their cannon often, their small stock of ammunition will be soon consumed, and then they must unavoidably run."

Job laughed tauntingly, and with an appearance of high scorn, before he answered—

"Yes, if the Bay-men were as dumb as the king's troops, and used such big guns! but the cannon of the colony want but little brimstone, and there's but few of them. Let the rake-hellies go up to Breed's; the people will teach them the law!"

Lionel had now obtained all he expected to learn from the simpleton, concerning the force and condition of the Americans; and as the moments were too precious to be wasted in vain discourse, he bid the lad repair to his quarters that night, and left him. On entering his own lodgings, Major Lincoln shut himself up in his private apartment, and passed several hours in writing, and examining important papers. One letter, in particular, was written, read, torn, and rewritten, five or six times, until at length he placed his seal, and directed the important paper with a sort of carelessness that denoted his patience was exhausted by repeated trials. These documents were entrusted to Meriton, with orders to deliver them to their several addresses, unless countermanded before the following day; and the young man hastily swallowed a late and light breakfast. While shut up in his closet, Lionel had several times thrown aside his pen to listen, as the hum of the place penetrated to his retirement, and announced the excitement and bustle which pervaded the streets of the town. Having at length completed the task he had assigned himself, he caught up his hat, and took his way, with hasty steps, into the centre of the place.

Cannon were rattling over the rough pavements, followed by ammunition-wagons, and officers and men of the artillery were seen in swift pursuit of their pieces. Aides-de-camp were riding furiously through the streets, charged with important messages; and here and there an officer might be seen issuing from his quarters, with a countenance in which manly pride struggled powerfully with inward dejection, as he caught the last glance of anguish, which followed his retiring form, from eyes that had been used to meet his own with looks of confidence and love. There was, however, but little time to dwell on these flitting glimpses of domestic woe, amid the general bustle and glitter of the scene. Now and then the strains of martial music broke up through the windings of the crooked avenues, and detachments of the troops wheeled by, on their way to the appointed place of embarkation. While Lionel stood a moment at the corner of the street, admiring the firm movement of a body of grenadiers, his eye fell on the powerful frame and rigid features of M'Fuse, marching at the head of his company with that gravity which regarded the accuracy of the step amongst the important incidents of life. At a short distance from him was Job Pray, timing his paces to the tread of the soldiers, and regarding the gallant show with stupid admiration, while his ear unconsciously drank the inspiriting music of their band. As this fine body of men passed on, it was immediately succeeded by a battalion, in which Lionel instantly recognized the facings of his own regiment. The warm-hearted Polwarth led its forward files, and, waving his hand, he cried—

"God bless you, Leo, God bless you—we shall make a fair stand-up fight of this; there is an end of all stag-hunting."

The notes of the horns rose above his voice, and Lionel could do no more than return his cordial salute; when, recalled to his purpose by the sight of his comrades, he turned and pursued his way to the quarters of the commander-in-chief.

The gate of Province-House was thronged with military men; some waiting for admittance, and others entering and departing with the air of those who were charged with the execution of matters of the deepest moment. The name of Major Lincoln was hardly announced before an aid appeared to conduct him into the presence of the governor, with a

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politeness and haste that several gentlemen, who had been in waiting for hours, deemed in a trifling degree unjust.

Lionel, however, having little to do with murmurs which he did not hear, followed his conductor, and was immediately ushered into the apartment, where a council of war had just closed its deliberations. On the threshold of its door he was compelled to give way to an officer, who was departing in haste, and whose powerful frame seemed bent a little in the intensity of thought, as his dark, military countenance lighted for an instant with the salutation he returned to the low bow of the young soldier. Around this chief a group of younger men immediately clustered, and as they departed in company, Lionel was enabled to gather, from their conversation, that they took their way for the field of battle. The room was filled with officers of high rank; though here and there was to be seen a man in civil attire, whose disappointment and bitter looks announced him to be one of those mandamus counsellors, whose evil advice had hastened the mischief their wisdom could never repair. From out a small circle of these mortified civilians, the unpretending person of Gage advanced to meet Lionel, forming a marked contrast, by the simplicity of his dress, to the military splendor that was glittering around him.

"In what can I oblige Major Lincoln?" he said, taking the young man by the hand cordially, as if glad to be rid of the troublesome counsellors he had so unceremoniously quitted.

"'Wolfe's own' has just passed me on its way to the boats, and I have ventured to intrude on your excellency to inquire if it were not time its major had resumed his duty."

A shade of thought was seated for a moment on the placid features of the general, and he then answered with a friendly smile—

"'Twill be no more than an affair of outposts, and must be quickly ended. But should I grant the request of every brave young man whose spirit is up to-day, it might cost his majesty's service the life of some officer that would make the purchase of the pile of earth too dear."

"But may I not be permitted to say, that the family of Lincoln is of the province, and its example should not be lost on such an occasion?"

"The loyalty of the colonies is too well represented here to need the sacrifice," said Gage, glancing his eyes carelessly at the expecting group behind him.—"My council have decided on the officers to be employed, and I regret that Major Lincoln's name was omitted, since I know it will give him pain; but valuable lives are not to be lightly and unnecessarily exposed."

Lionel bowed in submission; and, after communicating the little he had gathered from Job Pray, he turned away, and found himself near another officer of high rank, who smiled as he observed his disappointed countenance, and, taking him by the arm, led him from the room, with a freedom suited to his fine figure and easy air.

"Then, like myself, Lincoln, you are not to battle for the king to-day," he said, on gaining the ante-chamber. "Howe has the luck of the occasion, if there can be luck in so vulgar an affair. But *allons;* accompany me to Copp's as a spectator, since they deny us parts in the drama; and perhaps we may pick up materials for a pasquinade, though not for an epic."

"Pardon me, General Burgoyne," said Lionel, "if I view the matter with more serious eyes than yourself."

"Ah! I had forgot that you were a follower of Percy in the hunt of Lexington!" interrupted the other; "we will call it a tragedy, then, if it better suits your humor. For myself, Lincoln, I weary of these crooked streets and gloomy houses, and, having some taste for the poetry of nature, would have long since looked out upon the deserted fields of these husbandmen, had the authority, as well as the inclination, rested with me. But Clinton is joining us; he, too, is for Copp's, where we can all take a lesson in arms, by studying the manner in which Howe wields his battalions."

A soldier of middle age now joined them, whose stout frame, while it wanted the grace and ease of the gentleman who still held Lionel by the arm, bore a martial character to which the look of the quiet and domestic Gage was a stranger; and, followed by their several attendants, the whole party immedi-

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ately left the Government-house to take their destined position on the eminence so often mentioned.

As they entered the street, Burgoyne relinquished the arm of his companion, and moved with becoming dignity by the side of his brother general. Lionel gladly availed himself of this alteration, to withdraw a little from the group, whose steps he followed at such a distance as permitted him to observe those exhibitions of feeling, on the part of the inhabitants, which the pride of the others induced them to overlook. Pallid and anxious female faces were gleaming out upon them from every window, while the roofs of the houses, and the steeples of the churches, were beginning to throng with more daring and equally interested spectators. The drums no longer rolled along the narrow streets, though occasionally the shrill strain of a fife was heard from the water, announcing the movements of the troops to the opposite peninsula. Over all was heard the incessant roaring of the artillery, which, untired, had not ceased to rumble in the air since the appearance of light, until the ear, accustomed to its presence, had learnt to distinguish the lesser sounds we have recorded.

As the party descended into the lower passages of the town, it appeared deserted by everything having life; the open windows and neglected doors betraying the urgency of the feelings which had called the population to situations more favorable for observing the approaching contest. This appearance of intense curiosity excited the sympathies of even the old and practised soldiers; and, quickening their paces, the whole soon rose from among the gloomy edifices to the open and unobstructed view from the hill.

The whole scene now lay before them. Nearly in their front was the village of Charlestown, with its deserted streets and silent roofs, looking like a place of the dead; or, if the signs of life were visible within its open avenues, 'twas merely some figure moving swiftly in the solitude, like one who hastened to quit the devoted spot. On the opposite point of the southeastern face of the peninsula, and at the distance of a thousand yards, the ground was already covered by masses of human beings, in scarlet, with their arms glittering in a noonday sun. Between the two, though in the more immediate vicinity of the silent town, the rounded ridge, already described, rose abruptly from a flat that was bounded by the water, until, having attained an elevation of some fifty or sixty feet, it swelled gradually to the little crest, where was planted the humble object that had occasioned all this commotion. The meadows, on the right, were still peaceful and smiling, as in the most quiet days of the province, though the excited fancy of Lionel imagined that a sullen stillness lingered about the neglected kilns in their front, and over the whole landscape, that was in gloomy consonance with the approaching scene. Far on the left, across the waters of the Charles, the American camp had poured forth its thousands to the hills; and the whole population of the country, for many miles inland, had gathered to a point to witness a struggle charged with the fate of their nation. Beacon-Hill rose from out the appalling silence of the town of Boston, like a pyramid of living faces, with every eye fixed on the fatal point; and men hung along the yards of the shipping, or were suspended on cornices, cupolas, and steeples, in thoughtless security, while every other sense was lost in the absorbing interest of the sight. The vessels of war had hauled deep into the rivers, or, more properly, those narrow arms of the sea which formed the peninsula, and sent their iron missiles, with unwearied industry, across the low passage, which alone opened the means of communication between the self-devoted yeomen on the hill, and their distant countrymen. While battalion landed after battalion on the point, cannon-balls from the battery of Copp's, and the vessels of war, were glancing up the natural glacis that surrounded the redoubt, burying themselves in its earthen parapet, or plunging with violence into the deserted sides of the loftier height which lay a few hundred yards in its rear; and the black and smoking bombs appeared to hover above the spot, as if pausing to select the places in which to plant their deadly combustibles.

Notwithstanding these appalling preparations, and ceaseless annoyances, throughout that long and anxious morning, the stout husbandmen on the hill had never ceased their steady efforts to maintain, to the utter-

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most extremity, the post they had so daringly assumed. In vain the English exhausted every means to disturb their stubborn foes; the pick, the shovel, and the spade continued to perform their offices; and mound rose after mound, amidst the din and danger of the cannonade, steadily, and as well as if the fanciful conceits of Job Pray embraced their real objects, and the laborers were employed in the peaceful pursuits of their ordinary lives. This firmness, however, was not like the proud front which high training can impart to the most common mind; for, ignorant of the glare of military show; in the simple and rude vestments of their calling; armed with such weapons as they had seized from the hooks above their own mantels; and without even a banner to wave its cheering folds above their heads, they stood, sustained only by the righteousness of their cause, and those deep moral principles which they had received from their fathers, and which they intended this day should show were to be transmitted untarnished to their children. It was afterward known, that they endured their labors and their dangers even in want of that sustenance which is so essential to support animal spirits in moments of calmness and ease; while their enemies, on the point, awaiting the arrival of their latest bands, were securely devouring a meal, which to hundreds amongst them proved to be their last. The fatal instant now seemed approaching. A general movement was seen among the battalions of the British, who began to spread along the shore, under cover of the brow of the hill—the lingering boats having arrived with the rear of their detachments—and officers hurried from regiment to regiment with the final mandates of their chief. At this moment a body of Americans appeared on the crown of Bunker Hill, and descending swiftly by the road, disappeared in the meadows to the left of their own redoubt. This band was followed by others, who, like themselves, had broken through the dangers of the narrow pass, by braving the fire of the shipping, and who also hurried to join their comrades on the low land. The British general determined at once to anticipate the arrival of further reinforcements, and gave forth the long-expected order to prepare for the attack.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Th' imperious Briton, on the well-fought ground,
No cause for joy or wanton triumph found;
But saw, with grief, their dreams of conquest vain,
Felt the deep wounds, and mourn'd their vet'rans slain."—HUMPHREYS.

THE Americans had made a show, in the course of that fearful morning, of returning the fire of their enemies, by throwing a few shot from their light field-pieces, as if in mockery of the tremendous cannonade which they sustained. But as the moment of severest trial approached, the same awful stillness, which had settled upon the deserted streets of Charlestown, hovered around the redoubt. On the meadows, to its left, the recently arrived bands hastily threw the rails of two fences into one, and, covering the whole with the mown grass that surrounded them, they posted themselves along the frail defence, which answered no better purpose than to conceal their weakness from their adversaries. Behind this characteristic rampart, several bodies of husbandmen, from the neighboring provinces of New Hampshire and Connecticut, lay on their arms, in sullen expectation. Their line extended from the shore to the base of the ridge, where it terminated several hundred feet behind the works; leaving a wide opening in a diagonal direction, between the fence and an earthen breastwork, which ran a short distance down the declivity of the hill, from the northeastern angle of the redoubt. A few hundred yards in the rear of this rude disposition, the naked crest of Bunker Hill rose unoccupied and undefended; and the streams of the Charles and Mystic, sweeping around its base, approached so near each other as to blend the sounds of their rippling. It was across this low and narrow isthmus, that the royal frigates poured a stream of fire, that never ceased, while around it hovered the numerous parties of the undisciplined Americans, hesitating to attempt the dangerous passage.

In this manner Gage had, in a great degree, surrounded the devoted peninsula with his power; and the bold men, who had so daringly planted themselves under the muzzles of his cannon, were left, as already stated, unsupported, without nourishment, and with weapons from their own gun-hooks, singly to maintain the honor of their nation. In-

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cluding men of all ages and conditions, there might have been two thousand of them; but, as the day advanced, small bodies of their countrymen, taking counsel of their feelings, and animated by the example of the old partisan of the woods, who crossed and recrossed the neck, loudly scoffing at the danger, broke through the fire of the shipping in time to join in the closing and bloody business of the hour.

On the other hand, Howe led more than an equal number of the chosen troops of his prince; and as boats continued to ply between the two peninsulas throughout the afternoon, the relative disparity continued undiminished to the end of the struggle. It was at this point in our narrative that, deeming himself sufficiently strong to force the defences of his despised foes, the arrangements immediately preparatory to such an undertaking were made in full view of the excited spectators. Notwithstanding the security with which the English general marshalled his warriors, he felt that the approaching contest would be a battle of no common incidents. The eyes of tens of thousands were fastened on his movements, and the occasion demanded the richest display of the pageantry of war.

The troops formed with beautiful accuracy, and the columns moved steadily along the shore, and took their assigned stations under cover of the brow of the eminence. Their force was in some measure divided; one moiety attempting the toilsome ascent of the hill, and the other moving along the beach, or in the orchards of the more level ground, toward the husbandmen on the meadows. The latter soon disappeared behind some fruit-trees and the brickkilns just mentioned. The advance of the royal columns up the ascent was slow and measured, giving time to their field-guns to add their efforts to the uproar of the cannonade, which broke out with new fury as the battalions prepared to march. When each column arrived at the allotted point, it spread the gallant array of its glittering warriors under a bright sun.

"It is a glorious spectacle," murmured the graceful chieftain by the side of Lionel, keenly alive to all the poetry of his alluring profession; "how exceeding soldier-like! and with what accuracy his 'first-arm ascends the hill,' toward his enemy!"

The intensity of his feelings prevented Major Lincoln from replying, and the other soon forgot that he had spoken, in the overwhelming anxiety of the moment. The advance of the British line, so beautiful and slow, resembled rather the ordered steadiness of a drill, than an approach to a deadly struggle. Their standards fluttered proudly above them; and there were moments when the wild music of their bands was heard rising on the air, and tempering the ruder sounds of the artillery. The young and thoughtless in their ranks turned their faces backward, and smiled exultingly, as they beheld steeples, roofs, masts, and heights, teeming with their thousands of eyes, bent on the show of their bright array. As the British lines moved in open view of the little redoubt, and began slowly to gather around its different faces, gun after gun became silent, and the curious artillerist, or tired seaman, lay extended on his heated piece, gazing in mute wonder at the spectacle. There was just then a minute when the roar of the cannonade seemed passing away like the rumbling of distant thunder.

"They will not fight, Lincoln," said the animated leader at the side of Lionel—"the military front of Howe has chilled the hearts of the knaves, and our victory will be bloodless!"

"We shall see, sir—we shall see!"

These words were barely uttered, when platoon after platoon, among the British, delivered its fire, the blaze of musketry flashing swiftly around the brow of the hill, and was immediately followed by heavy volleys that ascended from the orchard. Still no answering sound was heard from the Americans, and the royal troops were soon lost to the eye, as they slowly marched into the white cloud which their own fire had alone created.

"They are cowed, by heavens—the dogs are cowed!" once more cried the gay companion of Lionel, "and Howe is within two hundred feet of them, unharmed!"

At that instant a sheet of flame glanced through the smoke, like lightning playing in a cloud, while at one report a thousand muskets were added to the uproar. It was not altogether fancy which led Lionel to imagine

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that he saw the smoky canopy of the hill to wave, as if the trained warriors it enveloped faltered before this close and appalling discharge; but, in another instant, the stimulating war-cry, and the loud shouts of the combatants were borne across the strait to his ears, even amid the horrid din of the combat. Ten breathless minutes flew by like a moment of time, and the bewildered spectators on Copp's were still gazing intently on the scene, when a voice was raised among them, shouting—

"Hurrah! let the rake-hellies go up to Breed's; the people will teach 'em the law!"

"Throw the rebel scoundrel from the hill! Blow him from the muzzle of a gun!" cried twenty soldiers in a breath.

"Hold!" exclaimed Lionel—"'tis a simpleton, an idiot, a fool!"

But the angry and savage murmurs as quickly subsided, and were lost in other feelings, as the bright red lines of the royal troops were seen issuing from the smoke, waving and recoiling before the still vivid fire of their enemies.

"Ha!" said Burgoyne—"'tis some feint to draw the rebels from their hold!"

"'Tis a palpable and disgraceful retreat!" muttered the stern warrior nigh him, whose truer eye detected at a glance the discomfiture of the assailants.—"'Tis another base retreat before the rebels!"

"Hurrah!" shouted the reckless changeling again; "there come the reg'lars out of the orchard too!—see the grannies skulking behind the kilns! Let them go on to Breed's; the people will teach 'em the law!"

No cry of vengeance preceded the act this time, but fifty of the soldiery rushed, as by a common impulse, on their prey. Lionel had not time to utter a word of remonstrance, before Job appeared in the air, borne on the uplifted arms of a dozen men, and at the next instant he was seen rolling down the steep declivity, with a velocity that carried him to the water's edge. Springing to his feet, the undaunted changeling once more waved his hat in triumph, and shouted forth again his offensive challenge. Then turning, he launched his canoe from its hiding place among the adjacent lumber, amid a shower of stones, and glided across the strait; his little bark escaping unnoticed in the crowd of boats that were rowing in all directions. But his progress was watched by the uneasy eye of Lionel, who saw him land and disappear, with hasty steps, in the silent streets of the town.

While this trifling by-play was enacting, the great drama of the day was not at a stand. The smoky veil, which clung around the brow of the eminence, was lifted by the air, and sailed heavily away to the southwest, leaving the scene of the bloody struggle again open to the view. Lionel witnessed the grave and meaning glances which the two lieutenants of the king exchanged as they simultaneously turned their glasses from the fatal spot, and, taking the one proffered by Burgoyne, he read their explanation in the numbers of the dead that lay profusely scattered in front of the redoubt. At this instant, an officer from the field held an earnest communication with the two leaders; when, having delivered his orders, he hastened back to his boat, like one who felt himself employed in matters of life and death.

"It shall be done, sir," repeated Clinton, as the other departed, his honest brow sternly knit under high martial excitement.—"The artillery have their orders, and the work will be accomplished without delay."

"This, Major Lincoln!" cried his more sophisticated companion, "this is one of the trying duties of the soldier! To fight, to bleed, or even to die, for his prince, is his happy privilege; but it is sometimes his unfortunate lot to become the instrument of vengeance."

Lionel waited but a moment for an explanation—the flaming balls were soon seen taking their wide circuit in the air, and carrying their desolation among the close and inflammable roofs of the opposite town. In a very few minutes, a dense, black smoke arose from the deserted buildings, and forked flames played actively along the heated shingles, as though rioting in their unmolested possession of the place. He regarded the gathering destruction in painful silence; and, on bending his looks toward his companions, he fancied, notwithstanding the language of the other, that he read the deepest regret in the averted eye of him who had so unhesitatingly uttered the fatal mandate to destroy.

In scenes like these we are attempting to de-

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scribe, hours appear to be minutes, and time flies as imperceptibly as life slides from beneath the feet of age. The disordered ranks of the British had been arrested at the base of the hill, and were again forming under the eyes of their leaders, with admirable discipline, and extraordinary care. Fresh battalions, from Boston, marched with high military pride into the line, and everything betokened that a second assault was at hand. When the moment of stupid amazement, which succeeded the retreat of the royal troops, had passed, the troops and batteries poured out their wrath with tenfold fury on their enemies. Shot were incessantly glancing up the gentle acclivity, madly ploughing across its grassy surface, while black and threatening shells appeared to hover above the work, like the monsters of the air, about to stoop upon their prey.

Still all lay quiet and immovable within the low mounds of earth, as if none there had a stake in the issue of the bloody day. For a few moments only the tall figure of an aged man was seen slowly moving along the summit of the rampart, calmly regarding the dispositions of the English general in the more distant part of his line, and after exchanging a few words with a gentleman, who joined him in his dangerous lookout, they disappeared together behind the grassy banks. Lionel soon detected the name of Prescott, of Pepperell, passing through the crowd in low murmurs, and his glass did not deceive him when he thought, in the smaller of the two, he had himself descried the graceful person of the unknown leader of the "caucus."

All eyes were now watching the advance of the battalions, which once more drew nigh the point of contest. The heads of the columns were already in view of their enemies when a man was seen swiftly ascending the hill from the burning town: he paused amid the peril, on the natural glacis, and swung his hat triumphantly, and Lionel even fancied he heard the exulting cry, as he recognized the ungainly form of the simpleton, before it plunged into the work.

The right of the British once more disappeared in the orchard, and the columns in front of the redoubt again opened with all the imposing exactness of their high discipline. Their arms were already glittering in a line with the green faces of the mound, and Lionel heard the experienced warrior at at his side murmuring to himself—

"Let him hold his fire, and he will go in at the point of the bayonet!"

But the trial was too great for even the practised courage of the royal troops. Volley succeeded volley, and in a few moments they had again curtained their ranks behind the misty screen produced by their own fire. Then came the terrible flash from the redoubt, and the eddying volumes from the adverse hosts rolled into one cloud enveloping the combatants in its folds, as if to conceal their bloody work from the spectators. Twenty times, in the short space of as many minutes, Major Lincoln fancied he heard the incessant roll of American musketry die away before the heavy and regular volleys of the troops; and then he thought the sounds of the latter grew more faint, and were given at longer intervals.

The result, however, was soon known. The heavy bank of smoke, which now even clung along the ground, was broken in fifty places; and the disordered masses of the British were seen driven before their deliberate foes, in wild confusion. The flashing swords of the officers in vain attempted to arrest the torrent, nor did the flight cease, with many of the regiments, until they had even reached their boats. At this moment a hum was heard in Boston, like the sudden rush of wind, and men gazed in each other's faces with undisguised amazement. Here and there a low sound of exultation escaped some unguarded lip, and many an eye gleamed with a triumph that could no longer be suppressed. Until this moment the feelings of Lionel had vacillated between the pride of country and his military spirit; but, losing all other feelings in the latter sensation, he now looked fiercely about him as if he would seek the man who dare exult in the repulse of his comrades. The poetic chieftain was still at his side, biting his nether lip in vexation; but his more tried companion had suddenly disappeared. Another quick glance fell upon his missing form in the act of entering a boat at the foot of the hill. Quicker than thought, Lionel was on the shore, crying, as he flew to the water's edge—

"Hold! for God's sake, hold! remember

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the 47th is in the field, and that I am its major!"

"Receive him," said Clinton, with that grim satisfaction with which men acknowledge a valued friend in moments of great trial; "and then row for your lives, or, what is of more value, for the honor of the British name."

The brain of Lionel whirled as the boat shot along its watery bed, but before it had gained the middle of the stream he had time to consider the whole of the appalling scene. The fire had spread from house to house, and the whole village of Charlestown, with its four hundred buildings, was just bursting into flames. The air seemed filled with whistling balls, as they hurtled above his head, and the black sides of the vessels of war were vomiting their sheets of flame with unwearied industry. Amid this tumult, the English general and his companions sprung to land. The former rushed into the disordered ranks, and by his presence and voice recalled the men of one regiment to their duty. But long and loud appeals to their spirit and their ancient fame were necessary to restore a moiety of their former confidence to men who had been thus rudely repulsed, and who now looked along their thinned and exhausted ranks, missing, in many instances, more than half the well-known countenances of their fellows. In the midst of the faltering troops stood their stern and unbending chief; but of all those gay and gallant youths, who followed in his train as he had departed from Province-House that morning, not one remained, but in his blood. He alone seemed undisturbed in that disordered crowd; and his mandates went forth as usual, calm and determined. At length the panic, in some degree, subsided, and order was once more restored as the high-spirited and mortified gentlemen of the detachment regained their lost authority.

The leaders consulted together, apart, and the dispositions were immediately renewed for the assault. Military show was no longer affected, but the soldiers laid down all the useless implements of their trade, and many even cast aside their outer garments, under the warmth of a broiling sun, added to the heat of the conflagration, which began to diffuse itself along the extremity of the peninsula. Fresh companies were placed in the columns, and most of the troops were withdrawn from the meadows, leaving merely a few skirmishers to amuse the Americans who lay behind the fence. When each disposition was completed, the final signal was given to advance.

Lionel had taken post in his regiment, but marching on the skirt of the column, he commanded a view of most of the scene of battle. In his front moved a battalion, reduced to a handful of men in the previous assaults. Behind these came a party of the marine guards, from the shipping, led by their own veteran major; and next followed the dejected Nesbitt and his corps, amongst whom Lionel looked in vain for the features of the good-natured Polwarth. Similar columns marched on their right and left, encircling three sides of the redoubt by their battalions.

A few minutes brought him in full view of that humble and unfinished mound of earth, for the possession of which so much blood had that day been spilt in vain. It lay, as before, still as if none breathed within its bosom, though a terrific row of dark tubes were arrayed along its top, following the movements of the approaching columns, as the eyes of the imaginary charmers of our own wilderness are said to watch their victims. As the uproar of the artillery again grew fainter, the crash of falling streets, and the appalling sounds of the conflagration, on their left, became more audible. Immense volumes of black smoke issued from the smouldering ruins, and, bellying outward, fold beyond fold, it overhung the work in a hideous cloud, casting its gloomy shadow across the place of blood.

A strong column was now seen ascending, as if from out the burning town, and the advance of the whole became quick and spirited. A low call ran through the platoons to note the naked weapons of their adversaries, and it was followed by the cry of "To the bayonet! to the bayonet!"

"Hurrah! for the Royal Irish!" shouted M'Fuse, at the head of the dark column from the conflagration.

"Hurrah!" echoed a well-known voice from the silent mound. "Let them come on to Breed's; the people will teach 'em the law!"

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Men think at such moments with the rapidity of lightning, and Lionel had even fancied his comrades in possession of the work, when the terrible stream of fire flashed in the faces of the men in front.

"Push on with the ——th," cried the veteran major of marines—"push on, or the 18th will get the honor of the day!"

"We cannot," murmured the soldiers of the ——th; "their fire is too heavy!"

"Then break, and let the marines pass through you!"

The feeble battalion melted away, and the warriors of the deep, trained to conflicts of hand to hand, sprang forward, with a loud shout, in their places. The Americans, exhausted of their ammunition, now sunk sullenly back, a few hurling stones at their foes, in desperate indignation. The cannon of the British had been brought to enfilade their short breastwork, which was no longer tenable; and as the columns approached closer to the low rampart, it became a mutual protection to the adverse parties.

"Hurrah! for the Royal Irish!" again shouted M'Fuse, rushing up the trifling ascent, which was but of little more than his own height.

"Hurrah!" repeated Pitcairn, waving his sword on another angle of the work—"the day's our own!"

One more sheet of flame issued out of the bosom of the work, and all those brave men, who had emulated the examples of their officers, were swept away, as though a whirlwind had passed along. The grenadier gave his war-cry once more, before he pitched headlong among his enemies; while Pitcairn fell back into the arms of his own child. The cry of "Forward, 47th," rung through their ranks, and in their turn this veteran battalion gallantly mounted the ramparts. In the shallow ditch Lionel passed the expiring marine, and caught the dying and despairing look from his eyes, and in another instant he found himself in the presence of his foes. As company followed company into the defenceless redoubt, the Americans sullenly retired by its rear, keeping the bayonets of the soldiers at bay with clubbed muskets and sinewy arms. When the whole issued upon the open ground, the husbandmen received a close and fatal fire from the battalions, which were now gathering around them on three sides. A scene of wild and savage confusion then succeeded to the order of the fight, and many fatal blows were given and taken, the mêlée rendering the use of fire-arms nearly impossible for several minutes.

Lionel continued in advance, pressing on the footsteps of the retiring foe, stepping over many a lifeless body in his difficult progress. Notwithstanding the hurry, and vast disorder of the fray, his eye fell on the form of the graceful stranger, stretched lifeless on the parched grass, which had greedily drank his blood. Amid the ferocious cries, and fiercer passions of the moment, the young man paused, and glanced his eyes around him, with an expression that said he thought the work of death should cease. At this instant the trappings of his attire caught the glaring eyeballs of a dying yeoman, who exerted his wasting strength to sacrifice one more worthy victim to the manes of his countrymen. The whole of the tumultuous scene vanished from the senses of Lionel at the flash of the musket of this man, and he sunk beneath the feet of the combatants, insensible of further triumph, and of every danger.

The fall of a single officer, in such a contest, was a circumstance not to be regarded; and regiments passed over him, without a single man stooping to inquire into his fate. When the Americans had disengaged themselves from the troops, they descended into the little hollow between the two hills, swiftly, and like a disordered crowd, bearing off most of their wounded, and leaving but few prisoners in the hands of their foes. The formation of the ground favored their retreat, as hundreds of bullets whistled harmlessly above their heads; and by the time they gained the acclivity of Bunker, distance was added to their security. Finding the field lost, the men at the fence broke away in a body from their position, and abandoned the meadows; the whole moving in confused masses behind the crest of the adjacent height. The shouting soldiery followed in their footsteps, pouring in fruitless and distant volleys; but on the summit of Bunker their tired platoons were halted, and they beheld the throng move fearlessly through the

tremendous fire that enfiladed the low pass, as little injured as though most of them bore charmed lives.

The day was now drawing to a close. With the disappearance of their enemies, the ships and batteries ceased their cannonade; and presently not a musket was heard in that place, where so fierce a contest had so long raged. The troops commenced fortifying the outward eminence, on which they rested, in order to maintain their barren conquest; and nothing further remained for the achievement of the royal lieutenants, but to go and mourn over their victory.

CHAPTER XVII.

"She speaks, yet she says nothing; what of that?
Her eye discourses—I will answer it.—*Romeo.*"

ALTHOUGH the battle of Bunker Hill was fought while the grass yet lay on the meadows, the heats of summer had been followed by the nipping frosts of November; the leaf had fallen in its hour, and the tempests and biting colds of February had succeeded, before Major Lincoln left that couch where he had been laid, when carried, in total helplessness, from the fatal heights of the peninsula. Throughout the whole of that long period, the hidden bullet had defied the utmost skill of the British surgeons; nor could all their science and experience embolden them to risk cutting certain arteries and tendons in the body of the heir of Lincoln, which were thought to obstruct the passage to that obstinate lead, which, all agreed, alone impeded the recovery of the unfortunate sufferer. This indecision was one of the penalties that poor Lionel paid for his greatness; for had it been Meriton who lingered, instead of his master, it is quite probable the case would have been determined at a much earlier hour. At length, a young and enterprising leech, with the world before him, arrived from Europe, who, possessing greater skill or more effrontery (the effects are sometimes the same) than his fellows, did not hesitate to decide at once on the expediency of an operation. The medical staff of the army sneered at this bold innovator, and at first were content with such silent testimonials of their contempt. But when the friends of the patient, listening, as usual, to the whisperings of hope, consented that the confident man of probes should use his instruments, the voices of his contemporaries became not only loud, but clamorous. There was a day or two when even the watch-worn and jaded subalterns of the army forgot the dangers and hardships of the siege, to attend with demure and instructed countenances to the unintelligible jargon of the "Medici" of their camp; and men grew pale, as they listened, who had never been known to exhibit any symptoms of the disgraceful passion before their more acknowledged enemies. But when it became known that the ball was safely extracted, and the patient was pronounced convalescent, a calm succeeded, that was much more portentous to the human race than the preceding tempest; and in a short time the daring practitioner was universally acknowledged to be the fonnder of a new theory. The degrees of M.D. were showered upon his honored head from half the learned bodies in Christendom, while many of his enthusiastic admirers and imitators became justly entitled to the use of the same magical symbols, as annexments to their patronymics, with the addition of the first letter in the alphabet. The ancient reasoning was altered to suit the modern facts, and before the war was ended, some thousands of the servants of the crown, and not a few of the patriotic colonists, were thought to have died, scientifically, under the favor of this important discovery.

We might devote a chapter to the minute promulgation of such an event, had not more recent philosophers long since upset the practice, (in which case the theory seems to fall, as a matter of course,) by a renewal of those bold adventures, which teach us, occasionally, something new in the anatomy of man; as in the science of geography, sealers of New England have been able to discover Terra Australis, where Cook saw nothing but water; or Parry finds veins and arteries in that part of the American continent, which had so long been thought to consist of worthless cartilage.

Whatever may have been the effect of the operation on the surgical science, it was healthful, in the first degree, to its subject. For seven weary months Lionel lay in a state in

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which he might be said to exist, instead of live, but little conscious of surrounding occurrences; and, happily for himself, nearly insensible to pain and anxiety. At moments the flame of life would apparently glimmer like the dying lamp, and then both the fears and hopes of his attendants were disappointed, as the patient dropped again into that state of apathy in which so much of his time was wasted. From an erroneous opinion of his master's sufferings, Meriton had been induced to make a free use of soporifics, and no small portion of Lionel's insensibility was produced by an excessive use of that laudanum, for which he was indebted to the mistaken humanity of his valet. At the moment of the operation, the adventurous surgeon had availed himself of the same stupefying drug, and many days of dull, heavy, and alarming apathy succeeded, before his system, finding itself relieved from its unnatural inmate, resumed its healthy functions, and began to renew its powers. By a singular good fortune his leech was too much occupied by his own novel honors, to follow up his success, *secundum artem*, as a great general pushes a victory to the utmost; and that matchless doctor, Nature, was permitted to complete the cure.

When the effects of the anodynes had subsided, the patient found himself entirely free from uneasiness, and dropped into a sweet and refreshing sleep, that lasted for many hours without interruption. He awoke a new man; with his body renovated, his head clear, and his recollections, though a little confused and wandering, certainly better than they had been since the moment when he fell in the mêlée on Breed's. This restoration to all the nobler properties of life occurred about the tenth hour of the day; and as Lionel opened his eyes, with understanding in their expression, they fell upon the cheerfulness which a bright sun, assisted by the dazzling light of the masses of snow without, had lent to every object in his apartment. The curtains of the windows had been opened, and every article of the furniture was arranged with a neatness that manifested the studied care which presided over his illness. In one corner, it is true, Meriton had established himself in an easy-chair, with an arrangement of attitude which spoke more in favor of his consideration for the valet than the master, while he was comforting his faculties for a night of watchfulness, by the sweet, because stolen, slumbers of the morning.

A flood of recollections broke into the mind of Lionel together, and it was some little time before he could so far separate the true from the imaginary as to attain a tolerably clear comprehension of what had occurred in the little age he had been dozing. Raising himself on one elbow, without difficulty, he passed his hand once or twice slowly over his face, and then trusted his voice in a summons to his man. Meriton started at the well-known sounds, and after diligently rubbing his eyes, like one who awakes by surprise, he arose and gave the customary reply.

"How now, Meriton!" exclaimed Major Lincoln; "you sleep as sound as a recruit on post, and I suppose you have been stationed like one, with twice-told orders to be vigilant."

The valet stood with open mouth, as if ready to devour his master's words with more senses than one, and then, as Lionel concluded, passed his hands in quick succession over his eyes as before, with a very different object, ere he answered—

"Thank God, sir, thank God! you look like yourself once more, and we shall live again as we used to. Yes, yes, sir—you'll do now—you'll do this time. That's a miracle of a man, is the great Lonnon surgeon! and now we shall go back to Soho, and live like civilizers. Thank God, sir, thank God! you smile again, and I hope if anything should go wrong you'll soon be able to give me one of those awful looks that I am so used to, and which makes my heart jump into my mouth, when I know I've been forgetful!"

The poor fellow, in whom long service had created a deep attachment to his master, which had been greatly increased by the solicitude of a nurse, was compelled to cease his unconnected expressions of joy, while he actually wept. Lionel was too much affected by this evidence of feeling to continue the dialogue, for several minutes; during which time he employed himself in putting on part of his attire, assisted by the gulping valet, when, drawing his robe-de-chambre around his person, he leaned on the shoulder of his

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man, and took the seat which the other had so recently quitted.

"Well, well, Meriton, that will do," said Lionel, giving a deep hem, as though his breathing was obstructed; "that will do, silly fellow; I trust I shall live to give you many a frown, and some few guineas, yet.—I have been shot, I know——"

"Shot, sir!" interrupted the valet—"you have been downright and unlawfully murdered! you were first shot, and then baggoneted, and after that a troop of horse rode over you. I had it from one of the Royal Irish, who lay by your side the whole time, and who now lives to tell of it—a good honest fellow is Terence, and if such a thing was possible that your honor was poor enough to need a pension, he would cheerfully swear to your hurts at the King's Bench, or War-office; Bridewell, or St. James', it's all one to the like of him."

"I dare say, I dare say," said Lionel, smiling, though he mechanically passed his hand over his body, as his valet spoke of the bayonet—"but the poor fellow must have transferred some of his own wounds to my person—I own the bullet, but object to the cavalry and the steel."

"No, sir, *I* own the bullet, and it shall be buried with me in my dressing-box, at the head of my grave," said Meriton, exhibiting the flattened bit of lead exultingly, in the palm of his hand—"it has been in my pocket these thirteen days, after tormenting your honor for six long months, hid in the what d'ye call 'em muscles, away behind the thingumy artery. But snug as it was, we got it out! He is a miracle, is the great Lonnon surgeon!"

Lionel reached over to his purse, which Meriton had placed regularly on the table, each morning, in order to remove it again at night, and, dropping several guineas in the hand of his valet, said—

"So much lead must need some gold to sweeten it. Put up the unseemly thing, and never let me see it again!"

Meriton coolly took the opposing metals, and after glancing his eyes at the guineas, with a readiness that embraced their amount in a single look, he dropped them carelessly into one pocket, while he restored the lead to the other with an exceeding attention to its preservation. He then turned his hand to the customary duties of his station.

"I remember well to have been in a fight on the heights of Charlestown, even to the instant when I got my hurt," continued his master—"and I even recollect many things that have occurred since; a period which appears like a whole life to me. But after all, Meriton, I believe my ideas have not been remarkable for their clearness."

"Lord, sir, you have talked to me, and scolded me, and praised me, a hundred and a hundred times over again; but you have never scolded as sharp like as you can, nor have you ever spoken and looked as bright as you do this morning!"

"I am in the house of Mrs. Lechmere," again continued Lionel, examining the room—"I know this apartment and those private doors too well to be mistaken."

"To be sure you are, sir; Madam Lechmere had you brought here from the field to her own house, and one of the best it is in Boston, too: and I expect that madam would somehow lose her title to it, if anything serious should happen to us!"

"Such as a bayonet, or a troop of horse! but why do you fancy any such thing?"

"Because, sir, when madam comes here of an afternoon, which she did daily, before she sickened, I heard her very often say to herself, if you should be so unfortunate as to die, there would be an end to all her hopes of her house."

"Then it is Mrs. Lechmere who visits me daily," said Lionel, thoughtfully; "I have recollections of a female form hovering around my bed, though I had supposed it more youthful and active than that of my aunt."

"And you are quite right, sir—you have had such a nurse the whole time as is seldom to be met with. For making a posset or a gruel, I'll match her with the oldest woman in the wards of Guy's; and, to my taste, the best barkeeper at the Lonnon is a fool to her at a negus."

"These are high accomplishments, indeed! and who may be their mistress?"

"Miss Agnus, sir; a rare good nurse is Miss Agnus Danforth! though in point of regard to the troops, I shouldn't presume to call her at all distinguishable."

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"Miss Danforth," repeated Lionel, dropping his expecting eyes, in disappointment, from the face of Meriton to the floor—"I hope she has not sustained all this trouble on my account alone. There are women enough in the establishment—one would think such offices might be borne by the domestics—in short, Meriton, was she without an assistant in all these little kindnesses?"

"*I* helped her, you know, sir, all I could; though my neguses never touch the right spot, like Miss Agnus's."

"One would think, by your account, that I have done little else than guzzle port wine for six months," said Lionel, pettishly.

"Lord, sir, you wouldn't drink a thimbleful from a glass, often; which I always took for a bad symptom; for I'm certain 'twas no fault of the liquor, if it wasn't drunk."

"Well, enough of your favorite beverage! I sicken at the name already—but, Meriton, have not others of my friends called to inquire after my fate?"

"Certainly, sir—the commander-in-chief sends an aid or a servant every day; and Lord Percy left his card more than——"

"Poh! these are calls of courtesy; but I have relatives in Boston—Miss Dynevor, has she left the town?"

"No, sir," said the valet, very coolly resuming the duty of arranging the vials on the night-table; "she is not much of a moving body, is that Miss Cecil."

"She is not ill, I trust?" demanded Lionel.

"Lord, it goes through me, part joy and part fear, to hear you speak again so quick and brisk, sir! No, she isn't downright ailing, but she hasn't the life and knowledge of things, as her cousin, Miss Agnus."

"Why do you think so, fellow?"

"Because, sir, she is mopy, and don't turn her hand to any of the light lady's work in the family. I have seen her sit in that very chair, where you are now, sir, for hours together, without moving; unless it was some nervous start when you groaned, or breathed a little upward through your honor's nose—I have taken it into my consideration, sir, that she poetizes; at all events, she likes what I calls quietude!"

"Indeed!" said Lionel, pursuing the conversation with an interest that would have struck a more observant man as remarkable—"what reason have you for suspecting Miss Dynevor of manufacturing rhymes?"

"Because, sir, she has often a bit of paper in her hand, and I have seen her read the same thing over and over again, till I'm sure she must know it by heart; which your poetizers always do with what they writes."

"Perhaps it was a letter?" cried Lionel, with a quickness that caused Meriton to drop a vial he was dusting, at the expense of its contents.

"Bless me, master Lionel, how strong and like old times you speak!"

"I believe I am amazed to find you know so much of the divine art, Meriton."

"Practice makes perfect, you know, sir," said the simpering valet—"I can't say I ever did much in that way, though I wrote some verses on a pet pig, as died down at Ravenscliffe, the last time we was there; and I got considerable eclaw for a few lines on a vase which Lady Bab's woman broke one day, in a scuffle when the foolish creature said as I wanted to kiss her; though all that knows me, knows that I needn't break vases to get kisses from the like of her!"

"Very well," said Lionel; "some day, when I am stronger, I may like to be indulged with a perusal—go now, Meriton, to the larder, and look about you; I feel the symptoms of returning health grow strong upon me."

The gratified valet instantly departed, leaving his master to the musings of his own busy fancy.

Several minutes passed away before the young man raised his head from the hand that supported it, and then it was only done when he thought he heard a light footstep near him. His ear had not deceived him, for Cecil Dynevor herself stood within a few feet of the chair, which concealed, in a great measure, his person from her view. It was apparent, by her attitude and her tread, that she expected to find the sick where she had seen him last, and where, for so many dreary months, his listless form had been stretched in apathy. Lionel followed her graceful movements with his eyes, and as the airy band of her morning cap waved aside at her own breathing, he discovered the unnatural paleness that was seated on her speaking features. But when she drew the folds of the

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bed-curtains, and missed the invalid, thought is not quicker than the motion with which she turned her light person towards the chair. Here she encountered the eyes of the young man, beaming on her with delight, and expressing all that animation and intelligence, to which they had so long been strangers. Yielding to the surprise and the gush of her feelings, Cecil flew to his feet, and clasping one of his extended hands in both her own, she cried—

"Lionel, dear Lionel, you are better! God be praised, you look well again!"

Lionel gently extricated his hand from the warm and unguarded pressure of her soft fingers, and drew forth a paper which she had unconsciously committed to his keeping.

"This, dearest Cecil," he whispered to the blushing maiden, "this is my own letter, written when I knew my life to be at imminent hazard, and speaking the purest thoughts of my heart—tell me, then, it has not been thus kept for nothing?"

Cecil dropped her face between her hands for a moment, in burning shame, and then, as all the emotions of the moment crowded around her heart, she yielded to them as a woman, and burst into a paroxysm of tears. It is needless to dwell on those consoling and seeducing speeches of the young man, which soon succeeded in luring his companion not only from her sobs, but even from her confusion, and permitted her to raise her beautiful countenance to his ardent gaze, bright and confiding as his fondest wishes could have made it.

The letter of Lionel was too direct, not to save her pride, and it had been too often perused for a single sentence to be soon forgotten. Besides, Cecil had watched over his couch too fondly and too long, to indulge in any of those little coquetries which are sometimes met with in similar scenes. She said all that an affectionate, generous, and modest female would say on such an occasion; and it is certain, that, well as Lionel looked on waking, the little she uttered had the effect to improve his appearance tenfold.

"And you received my letter on the morning after the battle?" said Lionel, leaning fondly over her, as she still, unconsciously, kneeled by his side.

"Yes—yes—it was your order that it should be sent to me only in case of your death; but for more than a month you were numbered as among the dead by us all.—Oh! what a month was that!"

"'Tis past, my sweet friend, and, God be praised, I may now look forward to health and happiness."

"God be praised, indeed," murmured Cecil, the tears again rushing to her eyes—"I would not live that month over again, Lionel, for all that this world can offer!"

"Dearest Cecil," he replied, "I can only repay this kindness and suffering on my account, by shielding you from the rude contact of the world, even as your father would protect you, were he again in being."

She looked up in his face with all the soul of a woman's confidence beaming in her eyes, as she answered—

"You will, Lincoln, I know you will—you have sworn it, and I should be a wretch to doubt you."

He drew her unresisting form into his arms, and folded her to his bosom. In another moment a noise, like one ascending the stairs, was heard through the open door of the room, when all the feelings of her sex rushed to the breast of Cecil. She sprung on her feet, and, hardly allowing time to the delighted Lionel to note the burning tints that suffused her whole face, she darted from the room with the rapidity and lightness of an antelope.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Dead, for a ducat, dead."—*Hamlet.*

While Lionel was in the confusion of feeling produced by the foregoing scene, the intruder, after a prelude of singularly heavy and loud steps, on the floor, as if some one approached on crutches, entered by a door opposite to the one through which Cecil had so suddenly vanished. At the next moment the convalescent was saluted by the full, cheerful voice of his visitor—

"God bless you, Leo, and bless the whole of us, for we need it," cried Polwarth, eagerly advancing to grasp the extended hand of his friend. "Meriton has told me that you have got the true mark of health—a good appetite—at last. I should have

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broken my neck in hurrying up to wish you joy on the moment, but I just stepped into the kitchen, without Mrs. Lechmere's leave, to show her cook how to broil the steak they are warming through for you—a capital thing after a long nap, and full of nutriment—God bless you, my dear Leo ; the look of your bright eye is as stimulating to my spirits as a West-India pepper is to the stomach."

Polwarth ceased shaking the hands of his reanimated friend, as with a husky voice he concluded, and turning aside under the pretence of reaching a chair, he dashed his hand before his eyes, gave a loud hem, and took his seat in silence. During the performance of this evolution, Lionel had leisure to observe the altered person of the captain. His form, though still rotund, and even corpulent, was much reduced in dimensions, while, in the place of one of those lower members, with which nature furnishes the human race, he had been compelled to substitute a leg of wood, somewhat inartificially made, and roughly shod with iron. This last sad alteration, in particular, attracted the look of Major Lincoln, who continued to gaze at it with glistening eyes, for some time after the other had established himself, to his entire satisfaction, in one of the cushioned seats of the apartment.

"I see my frame-work has caught your eye, Leo," said Polwarth, raising the wooden substitute with an air of affected indifference, and tapping it lightly with his cane. "'Tis not as gracefully cut, perhaps, as if it had been turned from the hand of master Phidias; but in a place like Boston, it is an invaluable member, inasmuch as it knows neither hunger nor cold!"

"The Americans, then, press the town," said Lionel, glad to turn the subject "and maintain the siege with vigor?"

"They have kept us in horrible bodily terror, ever since the shallow waters toward the main-land have been frozen, and opened a path directly into the heart of the place. Their Virginian generalissimo, Washington, appeared a short time after the affair over on the other peninsular (a cursed business that, Leo!), and with him came all the trimmings of a large army. Since that time they have worn a more military front, though little else has been done, excepting an occasional skirmish, but cooping us up, like so many uneasy pigeons, in our cage."

"And Gage chafes not at the confinement?"

"Gage!—we sent him off like the soups, months ago. No, no—the moment the ministry discovered that we had come to our forks, in good earnest, they chose black Billy to preside: and now we stand at bay with the rebels, who have already learnt that our leader is not a child at the grand entertainment of war."

"Yes, seconded by such men as Clinton and Burgoyne, and supported by the flower of our troops, the position can be easily maintained."

"No position can be easily maintained, Major Lincoln," said Polwarth, promptly, "in the face of starvation, both internal and external."

"And is the case so desperate?"

"Of that you shall judge yourself, my friend. When Parliament shut the port of Boston, the colonies were filled with grumblers; and now we have opened it, and would be glad to see their supplies, the devil a craft enters the harbor willingly.—Ah! Meriton, you have the steak, I see; put it here, where your master can have it at his elbow, and bring another plate—I breakfasted but indifferently well this morning.—So we are thrown completely on our own resources. But the rebels do not let us enjoy even them in peace.—This thing is done to a turn—how charmingly the blood follows the knife!—They have gone so far as to equip privateers, who cut off our necessaries, and he is a lucky man who can get a meal like the one before us."

"I had not thought the power of the Americans could have forced matters to such a pass."

"What I have mentioned, though of vital importance, is not half. If a man is happy enough to obtain the materials for a good dish—you should have rubbed an onion over these plates, Mr. Meriton—he don't know where he is to find fuel to cook it withal."

"Looking at the comforts with which I am surrounded, my good friend, I cannot but fancy your imagination heightens the distress."

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"Fancy no such silly thing; for when you get abroad, you will find it but too exact. In the article of food, if we are not reduced, like the men of Jerusalem, to eating one another, we are, half the time, rather worse off, being entirely destitute of wholesome nutriment. Let but an unlucky log float by the town, among the ice, and go forth and witness the struggling and skirmishing between the Yankees and our frozen fingers for its possession, and you will become a believer! 'Twill be lucky if the water-soaked relic of some wharf should escape without a cannonade! I don't tell you these things as a grumbler, Leo; for, thank God, I have only half as many toes as other men, to keep warmth in; and as for eating, a little will suffice for me, now my corporeal establishment is so sadly reduced."

Lionel paused in melancholy, as his friend attempted to jest at his misfortune, and then, by a very natural transition, for a young man in his situation, he proudly exclaimed—

"But we gained the day, Polwarth! and drove the rebels from their entrenchments, like chaff before a whirlwind!"

"Humph!" ejaculated the captain, laying his wooden leg carefully over its more valuable fellow, and regarding it ruefully, while he spoke—"had we made a suitable use of the bounties of nature, and turned their position, instead of running into the jaws of the beast, many might have left the field better supplied with appurtenances than are some among us at present. But dark William loves a brush, they say, and he enjoyed it, on that occasion, to his heart's content."

"He must be grateful to Clinton for his timely presence!"

"Does the devil delight in martyrdom? The presence of a thousand rebels would have been more welcome, even at that moment; nor has he smiled once on his good-natured assistant, since he thrust himself, in that unwelcome manner, between him and his enemy. We had enough to think of, with our dead and wounded, and in maintaining our conquest, or something more than black looks and unkind eyes would have followed the deed."

"I fear to inquire into the fortunes of the field, so many names of worth must be numbered in the loss."

"Twelve or fifteen hundred men are not to be knocked on the head out of such an army, and all the clever fellows escape. Gage, I know, calls the loss something like eleven hundred; but, after vaporing so much about the Yankees, their prowess is not to be acknowledged in its bloom at once. A man seldom goes on one leg but he halts a little at first, as I can say from experience—put down thirteen, Leo, as a medium, and you'll not miscalculate largely—yes, indeed, there were some brave young men amongst them! those rascally light-footed gentry, that I gave up so opportunely, were finely peppered—and there were the Fusileers had hardly men enough left to saddle their goat!" *

"And the marines! they must have suffered heavily; I saw Pitcairn fall before me," said Lionel, speaking with hesitation—"I greatly fear our old comrade, the grenadier, did not escape with better fortune."

"Mac!" exclaimed Polwarth, casting a furtive glance at his companion.—"Ay, Mac was not as lucky in that business as he was in Germany—he-em—Mac—had an obstinate way with him, Leo, a damn'd obstinate fellow in all military matters; but as generous a heart, and as free in sharing a mess-bill as any man in his majesty's service! I crossed the river in the same boat with him, and he entertained us with his queer thoughts on the art of war. According to Mac's notions of things, the grenadiers were to do all the fighting—a damn'd odd way with him had Mac!"

"There are few of us without peculiarities, and I could wish that none of them were more offensive than the trifling prejudices of poor Dennis M'Fuse."

"Yes, yes," added Polwarth, hemming violently, as if determined to clear his throat at every hazard; "he was a little opinionated in trifles, such as a knowledge of war, and matters of discipline; but in all important things as tractable as a child. He loved his joke, but it was impossible to have a less difficult or a more unpretending palate in

* This regiment, in consequence of some tradition, kept a goat, with gilded horns, as a memorial. Once a year it celebrated a festival, in which the bearded quadruped acted a conspicuous part. In the battle of Bunker Hill, the corps was distinguished alike for its courage and its losses.

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one's mess! The greatest evil I can wish him is breath in his body, to live and enjoy, in these hard times, when things become excellent by comparison, the sagacious provision which his own ingenuity contrived to secure out of the cupidity of our ancient landlord, Mister Seth Sage."

"Then that notable scheme did not entirely fall to the ground," said Lionel, with a feverish desire to change the subject once more. "I had thought the Americans were too vigilant to admit the intercourse."

"Seth has been too sagacious to permit them to obstruct it. The prices acted like a soporific on his conscience, and by using your name, I believe, he has found some friend of sufficient importance amongst the rebels to protect him in his trade. His supplies make their appearance twice a week as regularly as the meats follow the soups in a well ordered banquet."

"You then can communicate with the country, and the country with the town! Although Washington may wink at the proceeding, I should fear the scowl of Howe."

"Why, in order to prevent suspicions of unfair practices, and at the same time to serve the cause of humanity, so the explanation reads, you know, our sapient host has seen fit to employ a fool as his agent in the intercourse—a fellow, as you may remember, of some notoriety; a certain simpleton, who calls himself Job Pray."

Lionel continued silent for many moments, during which time his recollections began to revive, and his thoughts glanced over the scenes that occurred in the first months of his residence in Boston. It is quite possible that a painful, though still general and indefinite feeling mingled with his musings; for he evidently strove to expel some such unwelcome intruder, as he resumed the discourse with a strong appearance of forced gayety.

"Ay, ay, I well remember poor Job—a fellow once seen and known, not easily to be forgotten. He used, of old, to attach himself greatly to my person, but I suppose, like the rest of the world, I am neglected when in retirement."

"You do the lad injustice; he not only makes frequent inquiries, after his slovenly manner I acknowledge, concerning your condition, but sometimes he seems better informed in the matter than myself, and can requite my frequent answers to his questions, by imparting, instead of receiving, intelligence of your improvement; more especially since the ball has been extracted."

"That should be very singular, too," said Lionel, with a still more thoughtful brow.

"Not so very remarkable, Leo, as one would at first imagine," interrupted his companion —"the lad is not wanting in sagacity, as he manifested by his choice of dishes at our old mess-table.—Ah! Leo, Leo, we may see many a discriminating palate, but where shall we go to find another such a friend?—one who could eat and joke—drink and quarrel with a man, in a breath, like poor Dennis, who is gone from among us forever!—There was a piquancy about poor Mac, that acted on the dulness of life like condiments on the natural appetite!"

Meriton, who was diligently brushing his master's coat, an office that he performed daily, though the garment had not been worn in so long a period, stole a glance at the averted eye of the major, and understanding its expression to indicate a determined silence, he ventured to maintain the discourse in his own unworthy person.

"Yes, sir, a nice gentleman was Captain M'Fuse, and one as fought as stoutly for the king as any gentleman in the army, all agrees.—It was a thousand pities such a fine figure of a man hadn't a better idea of dress; it isn't all, sir, as is gifted in that way! But everybody says he's a detrimental loss, though there's some officers in town, who consider so little how to wear their ornaments, that if they were to be shot, I am sure no one would miss them."

"Ah! Meriton," cried the full-hearted Polwarth, "I see you are a youth of more observation than I had suspected! Mac had all the seeds of a man in him, though some of them might not have come to maturity. There was a flavor in his humor, that served as a relish to every conversation in which he mingled. Did you serve the poor fellow up in handsome style, Meriton, for his last worldly exhibition?"

"Yes, indeed, sir, we gave him as ornamental a funeral as can be seen out of London. Besides the Royal Irish, all the grenadiers was out; that is, all as wasn't

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hurt, which was near half of them. As I knowed the regard Master Lionel had for the captain, I dressed him with my own hands —I trimmed his whiskers, sir, and altered his hair more in front, and seeing that his honor was getting a little gray, I threw on a sprinkling of powder, and as handsome a corpse was Captain M'Fuse as any gentleman in the army, let the other be who he may!"

The eyes of Polwarth twinkled, and he blew his nose with a noise not unlike the sound of a clarion, ere he rejoined—

"Yes, yes, time and hardships had given a touch of frost to the head of the poor fellow; but it is a consolation to know that he died like a soldier, and not by the hands of that vulgar butcher, Nature; and that, being dead, he was removed according to his deserts!"

"Indeed, sir," said Meriton, with a solemnity worthy of the occasion, "we gave him a great procession—a great deal can be made out of his majesty's uniform, on such festivities, and it had a wonderful look about it!—Did you speak, sir?"

"Yes," added Lionel, impatiently; "remove the cloth and go inquire if there be letters for me."

The valet submissively obeyed, and after a short pause the dialogue was resumed by the gentlemen on subjects of a less painful nature.

As Polwarth was exceedingly communicative, Lionel soon obtained a very general, and, to do the captain suitable justice, an extremely impartial account of the situation of the hostile forces, as well as of all the leading events that had transpired since the day of Breed's. Once or twice the invalid ventured an allusion to the spirit of the rebels, and to the unexpected energy they had discovered; but Polwarth heard them all in silence, answering only by a melancholy smile, and, in the last instance, by a significant gesture toward his unnatural supporter. Of course, after this touching acknowledgment of his former error, his friend waived the subject for others less personal.

He learned that the royal general maintained his hardly-earned conquest on the opposite peninsula, where he was as effectually beleaguered, however, as in the town of Boston itself. In the meantime, while the war was conducted in earnest at the point where it commenced, hostilities had broken out in every one of those colonies, south of the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes, where the presence of the royal troops invited an appeal to force. At first, while the colonists acted under the impulses of the high enthusiasm of a sudden rising, they had been everywhere successful. A general army had been organized, as already related, and divisions were employed at different points to effect those conquests, which, in that early state of the struggle, were thought to be important to the main result. But the effects of their imperfect means and divided power were already becoming visible. After a series of minor victories, Montgomery had fallen in a most desperate but unsuccessful attempt to carry the impregnable fortress of Quebec; and ceasing to be the assailants, the Americans were gradually compelled to collect their resources to meet that mighty effort of the crown, which was known to be not far distant. As thousands of their fellow-subjects in the mother country manifested a strong repugnance to the war, the ministry so far submitted to the influence of that free spirit, which first took deep root in Britain, as to turn their eyes to those states of Europe, who made a trade in human life, in quest of mercenaries to quell the temper of the colonists. In consequence, the fears of the timid among the Americans were excited by rumors of the vast hordes of Russians and Germans, who were to be poured into their country, with the fell intent to make them slaves. Perhaps no step of their enemies had a greater tendency to render them odious in the eyes of the Americans, than this measure of introducing foreigners to decide a quarrel purely domestic. So long as none but men who had been educated in those acknowledged principles of justice and law, known to both people, were admitted to the contest, there were visible points, common to each, which might render the struggle less fierce, and in time lead to a permanent reconciliation. But they reasoned not inaptly, when they asserted, that in a contest rendered triumphant by slaves, nothing but abject submission could ensue to the conquered. It was like throwing away the scabbard, and, by abandoning reason, submitting the result to the sword

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alone. In addition to the estrangement these measures were gradually increasing between the people of the mother-country and the colonies, must be added the change it produced among the latter in their habits of regarding the person of their prince.

During the whole of the angry discussion, and the recriminations, which preceded the drawing of blood, the colonists had admitted, to the fullest extent, not only in their language, but in their feelings, that fiction of the British law, which says "the king can do no wrong." Throughout the wide extent of an empire, on which the sun was never known to set, the English monarch could boast of no subjects more devoted to his family and person than the men who now stood in arms against what they honestly believed to be the unconstitutional encroachments of his power. Hitherto the whole weight of their resentment had justly fallen on the advisers of the prince, who himself was thought to be ignorant, as he was probably innocent, of the abuses so generally practised in his name. But as the contest thickened, the natural feelings of the man were thought to savor of the political acts he was required to sanction with his name. It was soon whispered, among those who had the best means of intelligence, that the feelings of the sovereign were deeply interested in the maintenance of what he deemed his prerogative, and the ascendency of that body of the representatives of his empire, which he met in person and influenced by his presence. Ere long this opinion was rumored abroad, and as the minds of men began to loosen from their ancient attachments and prejudices, they confounded, by a very natural feeling, the head with the members; forgetting that "Liberty and Equality" formed no part of the trade of princes. The name of the monarch was daily falling into disrepute; and as the colonial writers ventured to allude more freely to his person and power, the glimmerings of that light were seen, which was a precursor of the rise of "the stars of the west" among the national symbols of the earth. Until then, few had thought, and none had ventured to speak openly, of independence, though events had been silently preparing the colonists for such a final measure.

Allegiance to the prince was the last and only tie to be severed; for the colonies already governed themselves in all matters, whether of internal or foreign policy, as effectually as any people could, whose right to do so was not generally acknowledged. But as the honest nature of George III. admitted of no disguise, mutual disgust and alienation were the natural consequences of the reaction of sentiment between the prince and his western people.*

All this, and much more of minute detail, was hastily commented on by Polwarth, who possessed, in the midst of his epicurean propensities, sterling good sense, and great integrity of intention. Lionel was chiefly a listener, nor did he cease the greedy and interesting employment until warned by his weakness, and the stroke of a neighboring clock, that he was trespassing too far on prudence. His friend then assisted the exhausted invalid to his bed, and after giving him a world of good advice, together with a warm pressure of the hand, he stumped his way out of the room, with a noise that brought, at every tread, an echo from the heart of Major Lincoln.

CHAPTER XIX.

"God never meant that man should scale the heavens
By strides of human wisdom."—COWPER.

A VERY few days of gentle exercise in the bracing air of the season, were sufficient to restore the strength of the invalid, whose wounds had healed while he lay slumbering under the influence of the anodynes prescribed by his leech. Polwarth, in consideration of the delapidated state of his own limbs, together with the debility of Lionel, had so far braved the ridicule of the army, as to set up one of those comfortable and easy conveyances, which, in the good old times of colonial humility, were known by the quaint and unpretending title of tom-

*NOTE.—The prejudices of the King of England were unavoidable in his insulated situation, but his virtues and integrity were exclusively the property of the man. His speech to our first minister after the peace cannot be too often recorded: "I was the last man in my kingdom to acknowledge your independence, and I shall be the last to violate it."

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Lionel thought himself a prisoner, as a man, armed with a long rifle, glided from the wood and laid his hand on the rein of his bridle.
—*Lionel Lincoln.*

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pungs. To equip this establishment, he had been compelled to impress one of the fine hunters of his friend. The animal had been taught, by virtue of much training from his groom, aided a little, perhaps, by the low state of the garners of the place, to amble through the snow as quietly as if he were conscious of the altered condition of his master's health. In this safe vehicle the two gentlemen might be seen daily, gliding along the upper streets of the town, and moving through the winding paths of the common, receiving the congratulations of their friends; or, in their turn, visiting others, who, like themselves, had been wounded in the murderous battle of the preceding summer, but who, less fortunate than they, were still compelled to submit to the lingering confinement of their quarters.

It was not difficult to persuade Cecil and Agnes to join in many of their short excursions, though no temptation could induce the latter to still the frown that habitually settled on her beautiful brow, whenever chance or intention brought them in contact with any of the gentlemen of the army. Miss Dynevor was, however, much more conciliating in her deportment, and even, at times, so gracious as to incur the private reproaches of her friend.

"Surely, Cecil, you forget how much our poor countrymen are suffering in their miserable lodgings without the town, or you would be less prodigal of your condescension to these butterflies of the army," cried Agnes, pettishly, while they were uncloaking after one of these rides, during which the latter thought her cousin had lost sight of that tacit compact, by which most of the women of the colonies deemed themselves bound to exhibit their feminine resentments to their invaders. "Were a chief from our own army presented to you, he could not have been received in a sweeter manner than you bestowed your smile to-day on that Sir Digby Dent!"

"I can say nothing in favor of its sweetness, my acid cousin, but *that* Sir Digby Dent is a gentleman——"

"A gentleman! yes—so is every Englishman who wears a scarlet coat, and knows how to play off his airs in the colonies!"

"And as I hope I have some claims to be called a lady," continued Cecil, quietly, "I do not know why, in the little intercourse we have, I should be rude to him."

"Cecil Dynevor!" exclaimed Agnes, with a sparkling eye, and with a woman's intuitive perception of the other's motives, "all Englishmen are not Lionel Lincolns."

"Nor is Major Lincoln an Englishman," returned Cecil, laughing, while she blushed; "though I have reason to think that Captain Polwarth may be."

"Silly, child, silly; the poor man has paid the penalty of his offence, and is to be regarded with pity."

"Have a care, my coz.—Pity is one of a large connection of gentle feelings; when you once admit the first-born, you may leave open your doors to the whole family."

"Now that is exactly the point in question, Cecil—because you esteem Major Lincoln, you are willing to admire Howe and all his myrmidons; but I can pity, and still be firm."

"*Le bon temps viendra!*"

"Never," interrupted Agnes, with a warmth that prevented her perceiving how much she admitted—"never, at least under the guise of a scarlet coat."

Cecil smiled, but having completed her toilet, she withdrew without making any reply.

Such little discussions, enlivened more or less by the peculiar spirit of Agnes, were of frequent occurrence, though the eye of her cousin became daily more thoughtful, and the indifference with which she listened was more apparent in each succeeding dialogue.

In the meantime, the affairs of the siege, though conducted with extreme caution, amounted only to a vigilant blockade.

The Americans lay by thousands in the surrounding villages, or were hutted in strong bands nigh the batteries which commanded the approaches to the place. Notwithstanding their means had been greatly increased by the capture of several vessels, loaded with warlike stores, as well as by the reduction of two important fortresses toward the Canadian frontiers, they were still too scanty to admit of that wasteful expenditure which is the usual accompaniment of war. In addition to their necessities, as a reason for forbearance, might also be mentioned the feelings of the colonists, who were anxious, in mercy

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to themselves, to regain their town as little injured as possible. On the other hand, the impression made by the battle of Bunker Hill was still so vivid as to curb the enterprise of the royal commanders, and Washington had been permitted to hold their powerful forces in check, by an untrained and half-armed multitude, that was, at times, absolutely destitute of the means of maintaining even a momentary contest.

As, however, a show of hostilities was maintained, the reports of cannon were frequently heard, and there were days when skirmishes between the advance parties of the two hosts brought on more heavy firings, which continued for longer periods. The ears of the ladies had long been accustomed to these rude sounds, and as the trifling loss which followed was altogether confined to the outworks, they were listened to with but little or no terror.

In this manner a fortnight flew swiftly away, without an incident to be related. One fine morning, at the end of that period, Polwarth drove into the little court-yard of Mrs. Lechmere's residence, with all those knowing flourishes he could command, and which, in the year 1775, were thought to indicate the greatest familiarity with the properties of a tom-pung. In another minute his wooden member was heard in the passage, timing his steps, as he approached the room where the rest of the party were waiting his appearance. The two cousins stood wrapped in furs, with their smiling faces blooming beneath double rows of lace to soften the pictures, while Major Lincoln was in the act of taking his cloak from Meriton, as the door opened for the admission of the captain.

"What, already dished!" exclaimed the good-natured Polwarth, glancing his eyes from one to the other—"so much the better; punctuality is the true leaven of life—a good watch is as necessary to the guest as the host, and to the host as his cook. Miss Agnes, you are amazingly murderous to-day! If Howe expects his subalterns to do their duty, he should not suffer you to go at large in his camp."

The fine eye of Miss Danforth sparkled as he proceeded, but happening to fall on his mutilated person, its expression softened, and she was content with answering with a smile—

"Let your general look to himself; I seldom go abroad but to espy his weakness!"

The captain gave an expressive shrug of his shoulder, and turning aside to his friend, said in an undertone—

"You see how it is, Major Lincoln; ever since I have been compelled to serve myself up, like a turkey from yesterday's dinner, with a single leg, I have not been able to get a sharp reply from the young woman—she has grown an even-tempered, tasteless morsel! and I am like a two-prong fork; only fit for carving! well, I care not how soon they cut me up entirely, since she has lost her piquancy—but shall we to the church?"

Lionel looked a little embarrassed, and fingered a paper he held in his hand, for a moment, before he handed it to the other for his perusal.

"What have we here?" continued Polwarth—'Two officers, wounded in the late battle, desire to return thanks for their recovery'—hum — hum—hum — two?—yourself, and who is the other?"

"I had hoped it would be my old companion and school-fellow?"

"Ha! what, me!" exclaimed the captain, unconsciously elevating his wooden leg, and examining it with a rueful eye—"umph! Leo, do you think a man has a particular reason to be grateful for the loss of a leg?"

"It might have been worse——"

"I don't know," interrupted Polwarth, a little obstinately—"there would have been more symmetry in it, if it had been both."

"You forget your mother," continued Lionel, as though the other had not spoken; "I am very sure it will give her heart-felt pleasure."

Polwarth gave a loud hem, rubbed his hand over his face once or twice, gave another furtive glance at his solitary limb, and then answered with a little tremor in his voice—

"Yes, yes—I believe you are quite right—a mother can love her child, though he should be chopped into mince-meat! The sex get that generous feeling after they are turned of forty—it's your young woman that is particular about proportions and correspondents."

"You consent, then, that Meriton shall hand in the request, as it reads?"

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Polwarth hesitated a single instant longer, and then, as he remembered his distant mother, (for Lionel had touched the right chord,) his heart melted within him.

"Certainly, certainly—it might have been worse as it was with poor Dennis—ay, let it pass for two; it shall go hard, but I find a knee to bend on the occasion. Perhaps, Leo, when a certain young lady sees I have a 'Te Deum' for my adventure she may cease to think me such an object of pity as at present."

Lionel bowed in silence, and the captain, turning to Agnes, conducted her to the sleigh with a particularly lofty air, that he intended should indicate his perfect superiority to the casualties of war. Cecil took the arm of Major Lincoln, and the whole party were soon seated in the vehicle that was in waiting.

Until this day, which was the second Sunday since his reappearance, and the first on which the weather permitted him to go abroad, Lionel had no opportunity to observe the altered population of the town. The inhabitants had gradually left the place, some clandestinely, and others under favor of passes from the royal general, until those who remained were actually outnumbered by the army and its dependents. As the party approached the "King's Chapel," the street was crowded by military men, collected in groups, who indulged in thoughtless merriment, reckless of the wounds their light conversation inflicted on the few townsmen, who might be seen moving towards the church, with deportments suited to the solemnity of their purpose, and countenances severely chastened by a remembrance of the day, and its serious duties. Indeed, so completely had Boston lost that distinctive appearance of sobriety, which had ever been the care and pride of its people, in the levity of a garrison, that even the immediate precincts of the temple were not protected from the passing jest or rude mirth of the gay and unreflecting, at an hour when a quiet was wont to settle on the whole province, as deep as if Nature had ceased her ordinary functions to unite in the worship of man. Lionel observed the change with mortification, nor did it escape his uneasy glances, that his two female companions concealed their faces in their muffs, as if to exclude a view that brought still more painful recollections to minds early trained in the reflecting habits of the country.

When the sleigh drew up before the edifice, a dozen hands were extended to assist the ladies in their short but difficult passage into the heavy portico. Agnes coldly bowed her acknowledgments, observing, with an extremely equivocal smile, to one of the most assiduous of the young men—

"We, who are accustomed to the climate, find no difficulty in walking on ice, though to you foreigners it may seem so hazardous." She then bowed, and walked gravely into the bosom of the church, without deigning to bestow another glance to her right hand or her left.

The manner of Cecil, though more chastened and feminine, and consequently more impressive, was equally reserved. Like her cousin, she proceeded directly to her pew, repulsing the attempts of those who wished to detain her a moment in idle discourse, by a lady-like propriety that checked the advance of all who approached her. In consequence of the rapid movement of their companions, Lionel and Polwarth were left among the crowd of officers who thronged the entrance of the church. The former moved up within the colonnade, and passed from group to group, answering and making the customary inquiries of men engaged in the business of war. Here, three or four veterans were clustered about one of those heavy columns, that were arranged in formidable show on three faces of the building, discussing, with becoming gravity, the political signs of the times, or the military condition of their respective corps. There, three or four unfledged boys, tricked in all the vain emblems of their profession, impeded the entrance of the few women who appeared under the pretence of admiration for the sex, while they secretly dwelt on the glitter of their own ornaments. Scattered along the whole extent of the entrance were other little knots; some listening to the idle tale of a professed jester, some abusing the land in which it was their fate to serve, and others recounting the marvels they had witnessed in distant climes, and in scenes of peril which beggared their utmost powers of description.

Among such a collection it was not diffi-

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cult, however, to find a few whose views were more elevated, and whose deportment might be termed less offensive, either to breeding or principles. With one of the gentleman of the latter class Lionel was held for some time in discourse, in a distant part of the portico. At length the sounds of the organ were heard issuing from the church, and the gay parties began to separate, like men suddenly reminded why they were collected in that unusual place. The companion of Major Lincoln had left him, and he was himself following along the colonnade, which was now but thinly peopled, when his ear was saluted by a low voice, singing in a sort of nasal chant at his very elbow—

"Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the market!"

Though Lionel had not heard the voice since the echoing cry had issued out of the fatal redoubt, he knew its first tones on the instant. Turning at this singular denunciation, he beheld Job Pray, erect and immovable as a statue, in one of the niches, in front of the building, whence he gave forth his warning voice, like some oracle speaking to its devotees.

"Fellow! will no peril teach you wisdom?" demanded Lionel—"how dare you brave our resentment so wantonly?"

But his questions were unheeded. The young man, whose features looked pale and emaciated, as if he had endured recent bodily disease, whose eye was glazed and vacant, and whose whole appearance was more squalid and miserable than usual, appeared perfectly indifferent to all around him. Without even altering the riveted gaze of his unmeaning eye, he continued—

"Woe unto you! for ye neither go in yourselves; neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in!"

"Art deaf? fool!" demanded Lionel.

In an instant the eye of the other was turned on his interrogator, and Major Lincoln felt a thrill pass through him when he met the wild gleam of intelligence that lighted the countenance of the changeling, as he continued, in the same ominous tones—

"Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, is in danger of hell-fire."

For a moment Lionel stood as if spellbound, by the manner of Job, while he uttered this dreadful anathema. But the instant the secret influence ceased, he tapped the lad lightly with his cane, and bid him descend from the niche.

"Job's a prophet," returned the other, dishonoring his declaration at the same time, by losing the singular air of momentary intelligence, in his usual appearance of mental imbecility—"it's wicked to strike a prophet. The Jews stoned the prophets, and beat them too."

"Do then as I bid you—would you stay here to be beaten by the soldiers? Go now, away; after service come to me, and I will furnish you with a better coat than the garment you wear."

"Did you never read the good book," said Job, "where it tells how you mus'n't take heed for food nor raiment? Nab says when Job dies he'll go to heaven, for he gets nothing to wear, and but little to eat. Kings wear their di'mond crowns and golden flauntiness; and kings always go to the dark place."

The lad suddenly ceased, and crouching into the very bottom of his niche, he began to play with his fingers, like an infant amused with the power of exercising its own members. At the same moment Lionel turned from him, attracted by the rattling of side-arms, and the tread of many feet behind him. A large party of officers, belonging to the staff of the army, had paused to listen to what was passing. Amongst them Lionel recognized, at the first glance, two of the chieftains, who, a little in advance of their attendants, were keenly eying the singular being that was squatted in the niche. Notwithstanding his surprise, Major Lincoln detected the scowl that impended over the dark brow of the commander-in-chief, while he bowed low, in deference to his rank.

"Who is this fellow, that dare condemn the mighty of the earth to such sweeping perdition?" demanded Howe—"his own sovereign amongst the number!"

"'Tis an unfortunate being, wanting in intellect, with whom accident has made me acquainted," returned Major Lincoln; "who hardly knows what he utters, and least of

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all in whose presence he has been speaking."

"It is to such idle opinions, which are conceived by the designing, and circulated by the ignorant, that we may ascribe the wavering allegiance of the colonies," said the British general. "I hope you can answer for the loyalty of your singular acquaintance, Major Lincoln?"

Lionel was about to reply, with some little spirit, when the companion of the frowning chief suddenly exclaimed—

"By the feats of the feathered Hermes, but this is the identical Merry Andrew who took the flying leap from Copp's, of which I have already spoken to you.—Am I in error, Lincoln? Is not this the shouting philosopher, whose feelings were so elevated on the day of Breed's, that he could not refrain from flying, but who, less fortunate than Icarus, made his descent on terra firma?"

"I believe your memory is faithful, sir," said Lionel, answering the smile of the other —"the lad is often brought to trouble by his simplicity."

Burgoyne gave a gentle impulse to the arm he held, as if he thought the wretched being before them unworthy of further consideration; though secretly with a view to prevent an impolitic exhibition of the well-known propensity of his senior to push his notions of military ascendancy to the extreme. Perceiving by the still darkening look of the other, that he hesitated, his ready lieutenant observed—

"Poor fellow! his treason was doubly punished, by a flight of some fifty feet down the declivity of Copp's, and the mortification of witnessing the glorious triumph of his majesty's troops.—To such a wretch we may well afford forgiveness."

Howe insensibly yielded to the continued pressure of the other, and his hard features even relaxed into a scowling smile, as he said, while turning away—

"Look to your acquaintance, Major Lincoln, or, bad as his present condition seems, he may make it worse. Such language cannot be tolerated in a place besieged. That is the word, I believe—the rebels call their mob a besieging army, do they not?"

"They do gather round our winter-quarters, and claim some such distinction——"

"It must be acknowledged they did well on Breed's too! The shabby rascals fought like true men."

"Desperately, and with some discretion," answered Burgoyne; "but it was their fortune to meet those who fought better, and with greater skill—shall we enter?"

The frown was now entirely chased from the brow of the chief, who said complacently—

"Come, gentlemen, we are tardy; unless more industrious, we shall not be in season to pray for the king, much less ourselves."

The whole party advanced a step, when a bustle in the rear announced the approach of another officer of high rank, and the second in command entered into the colonnade, followed also by the gentlemen of his family. The instant he appeared, the self-contented look vanished from the features of Howe, who returned his salute with cold civility, and immediately entered the church. The quick-witted Burgoyne again interposed, and as he made way in his turn, he found means to whisper into the ear of Clinton some well-imagined allusion to the events of that very field which had given birth to the heart-burnings between his brother generals, and had caused the feelings of Howe to be estranged from the man to whose assistance he owed so much. Clinton yielded to the subtle influence of the flattery, and followed his commander into the house of God, with a bland contentment that he probably mistook for a feeling much better suited for the place and the occasion. As the whole group of spectators, consisting of aids, secretaries, and idlers, without, immediately imitated the example of the generals, Lionel found himself alone with the changeling.

From the moment that Job discovered the vicinity of the English leader, to that of his disappearance, the lad remained literally immovable. His eye was fastened on vacancy, his jaw had fallen in a manner to give a look of utter mental alienation to his countenance; and, in short, he exhibited the degraded lineaments and figure of a man, without his animation or intelligence. But as the last footsteps of the retiring party became inaudible, the fear, which had put

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to flight the feeble intellects of the simpleton, slowly left him, and raising his face, he said, in a low, growling voice—

"Let him go out to Prospect; the people will teach him the law!"

"Perverse and obstinate simpleton!" cried Lionel, dragging him, without further ceremony, from the niche—"will you persevere in that foolish cry until you are whipped from regiment to regiment for your pains?"

"You promised Job the grannies shouldn't beat him any more, and Job promised to run your ar'n'ds."

"Ay! but unless you learn to keep silence, boy, I shall forget my promise, and give you up to the anger of all the grannies in town."

"Well," said Job, brightening in his look, like a fool in his exultation, "they are half of them dead, at any rate; Job heard the biggest man among 'em roar like a ravenous lion, 'hurrah for the Royal Irish,' but he never spoke ag'in; though there wasn't any better rest for Job's gun than a dead man's shoulder!"

"Wretch!" cried Lionel, recoiling from him in horror, "are your hands then stained with the blood of M'Fuse?"

"Job didn't touch him with his hands," returned the undisturbed simpleton—"for he died like a dog, where he fell!"

Lionel stood a moment in utter confusion of thought; but hearing the infallible evidence of the near approach of Polwarth in his tread, he said, in a hurried manner, and in a voice half choked by his emotions—

"Go, fellow, go to Mrs. Lechmere's, as I bid you—tell—tell Meriton to look to my fire."

The lad made a motion towards obeying, but checking himself, he looked up into the face of the other with a piteous and suffering look, and said—

"See, Job's numb with cold! Nab and Job can't get wood now; the king keeps men to fight for it—let Job warm his flesh a little; his body is cold as the dead!"

Touched to the heart by the request, and the helpless aspect of the lad, Lionel made a silent signal of assent, and turned quickly to meet his friend. It was not necessary for Polwarth to speak, in order to apprise Major Lincoln that he had overheard part of the dialogue between him and Job. His countenance and attitude sufficiently betrayed his knowledge, as well as the effect it had produced on his feelings. He kept his eyes on the form of the simpleton, as the lad shuffled his way along the icy street, with an expression that could not easily be mistaken.

"Did I not hear the name of poor Dennis?" at length he asked.

"'Twas some of the idle boastings of the fool. But why are you not in the pew?"

"The fellow is a protégé of yours, Major Lincoln; but you may carry forbearance too far," returned Polwarth, gravely.—"I come for you, at the request of a pair of beautiful eyes, that have inquired of each one that has entered the church, this half hour, where and why Major Lincoln has tarried."

Lionel bowed his thanks, and affected to laugh at the humor of his friend, while they proceeded together to the pew of Mrs. Lechmere without further delay.

The painful reflections excited by this interview with Job gradually vanished from the mind of Lionel, as he yielded to the influence of the solemn service of the church. He heard the difficult and suppressed breathing of the fair being who kneeled by his side, while the minister read those thanksgivings which personally concerned himself, and no little of earthly gratitude mingled with the loftier aspirations of the youth, as he listened. He caught the timid glance of the soft eye from behind the folds of Cecil's veil, as they rose, and he took his seat as happy as an ardent young man might well be fancied, under the consciousness of possessing the best affections of a female so youthful, so lovely, and so pure.

Perhaps the service was not altogether so consoling to the feelings of Polwarth. As he recovered his solitary foot again, with some little difficulty, he cast a very equivocal glance at his dismembered person, hemmed aloud, and finished with a rattling of his wooden leg about the pew, that attracted the eyes of the whole congregation, as if he intended the ears of all present should bear testimony in whose behalf their owners had uttered their extraordinary thanksgivings.

The officiating minister was far too discreet to vex the attention of his superiors with any prolix and unwelcome exhibitions of the Christian's duty. The impressive de-

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livery of his text required one minute. Four were consumed in the exordium. The argument was ingeniously condensed into ten more; and the peroration of his essay was happily concluded in four minutes and a half; leaving him the satisfaction of knowing, as he was assured by fifty watches, and twice that number of contented faces, that he had accomplished his task by half a minute within the orthodox period.

For this exactitude he doubtless had his reward. Among other testimonials in his favor, when Polwarth shook his hand to thank him for his kind offices in his own behalf, he found room for a high compliment to the discourse, concluding by assuring the flattered divine, "that, in addition to its other great merits, it was done in beautiful time!"

CHAPTER XX.

"Away; let naught to love displeasing,
My Winifreda, move your care;
Let naught delay the heavenly blessing,
Nor squeamish pride, nor gloomy fear."
—*Anonymous.*

It was perhaps fortunate for the tranquillity of all concerned, that, during this period of their opening confidence, the person of Mrs. Lechmere came not between the bright image of purity and happiness that Cecil presented in each lineament and action, and the eyes of her lover. The singular, and somewhat contradictory interests that lady had so often betrayed in the movements of her young kinsman, were no longer visible to awaken his slumbering suspicions. Even those inexplicable scenes, in which his aunt had so strangely been an actor, were forgotten in the engrossing feelings of the hour; or, if remembered at all, were only suffered to dim the pleasing pictures of his imagination, as an airy cloud throws its passing shadows across some cheerful and lovely landscape. In addition to those very natural auxiliaries, love and hope, the cause of Mrs. Lechmere had found a very powerful assistant, in the bosom of Lionel, through an accident which had confined her, for a long period, not only to her apartment, but to her bed.

On that day, when the critical operation was performed on the person of Major Lincoln, his aunt was known to have awaited the result in intense anxiety. As soon as the favorable termination was reported to her, she hastened toward his room with an unguarded eagerness, which, added to the general infirmities of her years, had nearly cost the price of her life. Her foot became entangled in her train, in ascending the stairs, but disregarding the warning cry of Agnes Danforth, with that sort of reckless vehemence that sometimes broke through the formal decorum of her manners, she sustained, in consequence, a fall that might well have proved fatal to a much younger woman. The injury she received was severe and internal; and the inflammation, though not high, was sufficiently protracted to arouse the apprehensions of her attendants. The symptoms were, however, now abating, and her recovery no longer a matter of question.

As Lionel heard this from the lips of Cecil, the reader will not imagine the effect produced by the interest his aunt took in his welfare was at all lessened by the source whence he derived his knowledge. Notwithstanding Cecil dwelt on such a particular evidence of Mrs. Lechmere's attachment to her nephew with much earnestness, it had not escaped Major Lincoln, that her name was but seldom introduced in their frequent conversations, and never, on the part of his companion, without a guarded delicacy that appeared sensitive in the extreme. As their confidence, however, increased with their hourly communications, he began gently to lift the veil which female reserve had drawn before her inmost feelings, and to read a heart whose purity and truth would have repaid a more difficult investigation.

When the party returned from the church, Cecil and Agnes immediately hastened to the apartment of the invalid, leaving Lionel in possession of the little wainscoted parlor by himself; Polwarth having proceeded to his own quarters, with the assistance of the hunter. The young man passed a few minutes in pacing the room, musing deeply on the scene he had witnessed before the church; now and then casting a vacant look on the fanciful ornaments of the walls, among which the armorial bearings of his own name were so frequent, and in such honorable situations.

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At length he heard that light footstep approach, whose sound had now become too well known to be mistaken, and in another instant he was joined by Miss Dynevor.

"Mrs. Lechmere!" he said, leading her to a settee, and placing himself by her side; "you found her better, I trust?"

"So well, that she intends adventuring, this morning, an interview with your own formidable self. Indeed, Lionel, you have every reason to be grateful for the deep interest my grandmother takes in your welfare! Ill as she has been, her inquiries in your behalf were ceaseless; and I have known her refuse to answer any questions about her own critical condition until her physician had relieved her anxiety concerning yours."

As Cecil spoke, the tears rushed into her eyes, and her bloom deepened with the strength of her feelings.

"It is to you, then, that much of my gratitude is due," returned Lionel; "for, by permitting me to blend my lot with yours, I find new value in her eyes. Have you acquainted Mrs. Lechmere with the full extent of my presumption? She knows of our engagement?"

"Could I do otherwise? while your life was in peril, I confined the knowledge of my interest in your situation to my own breast; but when we were flattered with the hopes of a recovery, I placed your letter in the hands of my natural adviser, and have the consolation of knowing, that she approves of my—what shall I call it, Lionel?—would not folly be the better word?"

"Call it what you will, so you do not disavow it. I have hitherto forborne inquiring into the views of Mrs. Lechmere, in tenderness to her situation; but I may flatter myself, Cecil, that she will not reject me?"

For a single instant the blood rushed tumultuously over the fine countenance of Miss Dynevor, suffusing even her temples and forehead with its healthful bloom; but, as she cast a reproachful glance at her lover, it deserted even her cheeks, while she answered calmly, though with a slight exhibition of displeasure in her air—

"It may have been the misfortune of my grandmother to view the head of her own family with too partial eyes; but, if it be so, her reward should not be distrust. The weakness is, I dare say, very natural, though not less a weakness."

For the first time Lionel fully comprehended the cause of that variable manner with which Cecil had received his attentions, until interest in his person had stilled her sensitive feelings. Without, however, betraying the least consciousness of his intelligence, he answered—

"Gratitude does not deserve so forbidding a name as distrust; nor will vanity permit me to call partiality in my favor a weakness."

"The word is a good aud a safe term, as applied to poor human nature," said Cecil, smiling once more with all her native sweetness, "and you may possibly overlook it, when you recollect that our foibles are sometimes hereditary."

"I pardon your unkind suspicion for that gentle acknowledgment. But I may now, without hesitation, apply to your grandmother for her consent to our immediate union?"

"You would not have your epithalamium sung, when, at the next moment, you may be required to listen to the dirge of some friend!"

"The very reason you urge against our marriage, induces me to press it, Cecil. As the season advances, this play of war must end. Howe will either break out of his bounds, and drive the Americans from the hills, or seek some other point for more active warfare. In either case you would be left in a distracted and divided country, at an age too tender for your own safety, rather the guardian than the ward of your helpless parent. Surely, Cecil, you would not hesitate to accept of my protection at such a crisis, I had almost dared to say, in tenderness to yourself, as well as to my feelings!"

"Say on," she answered; "I admire your ingenuity, if not your argument. In the first place, however, I do not believe your general can drive the Americans from their posts so easily; for, by a very simple process in figures, that even I understand, you may find, if one hill costs so many hundred men, that the purchase of the whole would be too dear—nay, Lionel, do not look so grave, I implore you! Surely, surely, you do not think I would speak idly of a battle that had nearly cost your life, and—and—my happiness."

"Say on," said Lionel, instantly dismissing the momentary cloud from his brow, and smiling fondly in her anxious face; "I admire your casuistry, and worship your feeling; but can, also, deny your argument."

Reassured by his voice and manner, after a moment of extreme agitation, she continued, in the same playful tones as before—

"But we will suppose all the hills won, and the American chief, Washington, who, though nothing but a rebel, is a very respectable one, driven into the country with his army at his heels; I trust it is to be done without the assistance of the women! Or, should Howe remove his force, as you intimate, will he not leave the town behind him? In either case, I should remain quietly where I am; safe in a British garrison, or safer among my countrymen."

"Cecil, you are alike ignorant of the dangers and of the rude lawlessness of war! Though Howe should abandon the place, 'twould be only for a time; believe me, the ministry will never yield the possession of a town like this, which has so long dared their power, to men in arms against their lawful prince."

"You have strangely forgotten the last six months, Lionel, or you would not accuse me of ignorance of the misery that war can inflict."

"A thousand thanks for the kind admission, dearest Cecil, as well as for the hint," said the young man, shifting the ground of his argument with the consistency, as well as the readiness, of a lover; "you have owned your sentiments to me, and would not refuse to avow them again?"

"Not one whose self-esteem will induce him to forget the weakness; but, perhaps, I might hesitate to do such a silly thing before the world."

"I will then put it to your heart," he continued, without regarding the smiling coquetry she had affected. "Believing the best, you will admit that another battle would be no strange occurrence?"

She raised her anxious looks to his face, but remained silent.

"We both know, at least I know, from sad experience, that I am far from being invulnerable. Now answer me, Cecil,—not as a female, struggling to support the false pride of her sex, but as a woman, generous and full of heart, like yourself,—were the events of the last six months to recur, whether would you live them over affianced in secret, or as an acknowledged wife, who might not blush to show her tenderness to the world?"

It was not until the large drops, that glistened at his words upon the dark lashes of Miss Dynevor, were shaken from the tremulous fringes that concealed her eyes, that she looked up, blushing, into his face, and said—

"Do you not then think that I endured enough, as one who felt herself betrothed; but that closer ties were necessary to fill the measure of my suffering?"

"I cannot even thank you as I would for those flattering tears, until my question is plainly answered."

"Is this altogether generous, Lincoln?"

"Perhaps not in appearance, but sincerely so in truth. By heaven, Cecil, I would shelter and protect you from a rude contact with the world, even as I seek my own happiness!"

Miss Dynevor was not only confused, but distressed; she however said, in a low voice—

"You forget, Major Lincoln, that I have one to consult, without whose approbation I can promise nothing."

"Will you, then, refer the question to her wisdom? Should Mrs. Lechmere approve of our immediate union, may I say to her, that you authorize me to ask it?"

Cecil said nothing; but smiling through her tears, she permitted Lionel to take her hand in a manner that a much less sanguine man would have found no difficulty in construing into an assent.

"Come then," he cried, "let us hasten to the apartment of Mrs. Lechmere; did you not say she expected me?" She suffered him to draw her arm through his own, and lead her from the room. Notwithstanding the buoyant hopes with which Lionel conducted his companion through the passages of the house, he did not approach the chamber of Mrs. Lechmere without some inward repugnance. It was not possible to forget entirely all that had so recently passed, or to still, effectually, those dark suspicions which had been once awakened within his bosom. His purpose, however, bore him onward, and a glance at the trembling being, who now absolutely leaned on him for support, drove

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every consideration, in which she did not form a most prominent part, from his mind.

The enfeebled appearance of the invalid, with a sudden recollection that she had sustained so much, in consequence of her anxiety in his own behalf, so far aided the cause of his aunt, that the young man not only met her with cordiality, but with a feeling akin to gratitude.

The indisposition of Mrs. Lechmere had now continued for several weeks, and her features, aged and sunken as they were by the general decay of nature, afforded strong additional testimony of the severity of her recent illness. Her face, besides being paler and more emaciated than usual, had caught that anxious expression, which great and protracted bodily ailing is apt to leave on the human countenance. Her brow was, however smooth and satisfied unless at moments, when a slight and involuntary play of the muscles betrayed that fleeting pains continued, at short intervals, to remind her of her illness. She received her visitors with a smile that was softer and more conciliating than usual, and which the pallid and careworn appearance of her features rendered deeply impressive.

"It is kind, cousin Lionel," she said, extending her withered hand to her young kinsman, "in the sick to come thus to visit the well. For after so long apprehending the worst on your account, I cannot consent that my trifling injury should be mentioned before your more serious wounds."

"Would, madam, that you had as happily recovered from their effects as myself," returned Lionel, taking her hand, and pressing it with great sincerity. "I shall never forget that you owe your illness to anxiety for me."

"Let it pass, sir; it is natural that we should feel stronger in behalf of those we love. I have lived to see you well again, and, God willing, I shall live to see this wicked rebellion crushed." She paused; and smiling, for a moment, on the young pair who had approached her couch, she continued, "Cecil has told me all, Major Lincoln."

"No, not all, dear madam," interrupted Lionel; "I have something yet to add; and in the commencement, I will own that I depend altogether on your pity and judgment to support my pretensions."

"Pretensions is an injudicious word, cousin Lionel; where there is an equality of birth, education, and virtues, and, I may say, considering the difference in the sexes, of fortune too, it may amount to claims; but pretensions is an expression too ambiguous. Cecil, my child, go to my library; in the small, secret drawer of my escritoire, you will find a paper bearing your name; read it, my love, and then bring it hither."

She motioned to Lionel to be seated, and when the door had closed on the retiring form of Cecil, she resumed the conversation.

"As we are about to speak of business, the confused girl may as well be relieved, Major Lincoln. What is this particular favor that I shall be required to yield?"

"Like any other sturdy mendicant, who may have already partaken largely of your bounty, I come to beg the immediate gift of the last and greatest boon you can bestow."

"My grandchild. There is no necessity for useless reserves between us, cousin Lionel, for you will remember, that I too am a Lincoln. Let us then speak freely, like two friends, who have met to determine on a matter equally near to the heart of each."

"Such is my earnest wish, madam—I have been urging on Miss Dynevor the peril of the times, and the critical situation of the country, in both of which I have found the strongest reasons for our immediate union."

"And Cecil——"

"Has been like herself; kind, but dutiful. She refers me entirely to your decision, by which alone she consents to be guided."

Mrs. Lechmere made no immediate reply, but her features powerfully betrayed the inward workings of her mind. It certainly was not displeasure that caused her to hesitate, her hollow eye lighting with a gleam of satisfaction that could not be mistaken; neither was it uncertainty, for her whole countenance seemed to express rather the uncontrollable agitation, which might accompany the sudden accomplishment of long-desired ends, than any doubt as to their prudence. Gradually her agitation subsided; and as her feelings became more natural, her hard eyes filled with tears, and when she spoke, there was a softness mingled with the

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tremor of her voice, that Lionel had never before witnessed.

"She is a good and a dutiful child, my own, my obedient Cecil! She will bring you no wealth, Major Lincoln, that will be esteemed among your hoards, nor any proud titles to add to the lustre of your honorable name; but she will bring you what is good, if not better—nay, I am sure it must be better—a pure and virtuous heart, that knows no guile!"

"A thousand and a thousand times more estimable in my eyes, my worthy aunt!" cried Lionel, melting before the touch of nature, which had so effectually softened the harsh feelings of Mrs. Lechmere, "let her come to my arms penniless, and without a name; she will be no less my wife, no less her own invaluable self."

"I spoke only by comparison, Major Lincoln, the child of Colonel Dynevor, and the granddaughter of the Lord Viscount Cardonnell, can have no cause to blush for her lineage; neither will the descendant of John Lechmere be a dowerless bride! When Cecil shall become Lady Lincoln, she need never wish to conceal the escutcheon of her own ancestors under the bloody hand of her husband's."

"May heaven long avert the hour when either of us may be required to use the symbol!" exclaimed Lionel.

"Did I not understand aright! was not your request for an instant marriage?"

"Never less in error, my dear madam; but you surely do not forget that one lives so mutually dear to us, who has every reason to hope for many years of life; and I trust, too, of happiness and reason!"

Mrs. Lechmere looked wildly at her nephew, and then passed her hand slowly before her eyes, from whence she did not withdraw them until an universal shudder had shaken the whole of her enfeebled frame.

"You are right, my young cousin," she said, smiling faintly—"I believe my bodily weakness has impaired my memory.—I was indeed dreaming of days long since past! You stood before me in the image of your desolate father, while Cecil bore that of her mother; my own long-lost, but wilful Agnes! Oh! she was my child! my child! and God has forgotten her faults in mercy to a mother's prayers!"

Lionel recoiled a step before the wild energy of the invalid's manner, in speechless amazement. A flush had passed into her pallid cheeks, and as she concluded, she clasped her hands before her, and sunk on the pillows which supported her back. Large insulated tears fell from her eyes, and, slowly moving over her wasted cheeks, dropped singly upon the counterpane. Lionel laid his hand upon the night-bell, but an expressive gesture from his aunt prevented his ringing.

"I am well again," she said—"hand me the restorative by your side."

Mrs. Lechmere drank freely from the glass, and in another minute her agitation subsided, her features settling into their rigid composure and her eye resuming its hard expression, as though nothing had occurred to disturb her usual cold and worldly look.

"You see how much better youth can endure the ravages of disease than age, by my present weakness, Major Lincoln," she continued; "let us return to other and more agreeable subjects—you have not only my consent, but my wish, that you should wed my grandchild. It is a happiness that I have rather hoped for, than dared to expect, and I will freely add, 'tis a consummation of my wishes that will render the evening of my days not only happy, but blessed!"

"Then, dearest madam, why should it be delayed?—no one can say what a day may bring forth, at such a time as this, and the moment of bustle and action is not the hour to register the marriage vows."

After musing a moment, Mrs. Lechmere replied—

"We have a good and holy custom in this religious province, of choosing the day which the Lord has set apart for his own exclusive worship, as that on which to enter into the honorable state of matrimony. Choose, then, between this or the next Sabbath for your nuptials."

Whatever might be the ardor of the young man, he was a little surprised at the shortness of the former period; but the pride of his sex would not admit of any hesitation.

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"Let it be this day, if Miss Dynevor can be brought freely to consent."

"Here then she comes, to tell you that, at my request, she does. Cecil, my own sweet child, I have promised Major Lincoln that you will become his wife this day."

Miss Dynevor, who had advanced into the centre of the room, before she heard the purport of this speech, stopped short, and stood like a beautiful statue, expressing astonishment and dismay. Her color went and came with alarming quickness, and the paper fell from her trembling hands to her feet, which appeared riveted to the floor.

"To-day!" she repeated, in a voice barely audible—"did you say to-day, my grandmother?"

"Even to-day, my child."

"Why this reluctance, this alarm, Cecil?" said Lionel, approaching, and leading her gently to a seat. "You know the peril of the times—you have condescended to own your sentiments—consider; the winter is breaking, and the first thaw can lead to events which may entirely alter our situation."

"All these may have weight in your eyes, Major Lincoln," interrupted Mrs. Lechmere, in a voice whose marked solemnity drew the attention of her hearers; "but I have other and deeper motives. Have I not already proved the dangers and the evils of delay? Ye are young, and ye are virtuous; why should ye not be happy? Cecil, if you love and revere me, as I think you do, you will become his wife this day."

"Let me have time to think, dearest grandmother. The tie is so new and so solemn! Major Lincoln,—dear Lionel—you are not wont to be ungenerous; I throw myself on your kindness!"

Lionel did not speak, and Mrs. Lechmere calmly answered—

"'Tis not at his, but my request, that you will comply."

Miss Dynevor rose from her seat by the side of Lionel, with an air of offended delicacy, and said, with a mournful smile, to her lover—

"Illness has rendered my grandmother timid and weak—will you excuse my desire to be alone with her?"

"I leave you, Cecil," he said, "but if you ascribe my silence to any other motive than tenderness to your feelings, you are unjust both to yourself and me."

She expressed her gratitude only in her looks, and he immediately withdrew, to await the result of their conversation in his own apartment. The half hour that Lionel passed in his chamber seemed half a year: but at the expiration of that short period of time, Meriton came to announce that Mrs. Lechmere desired his presence again in her room.

The first glance of her eye assured Major Lincoln that his cause had triumphed. His aunt had sunk back on her pillows, with her countenance set in a calculating and rigid expression, which indicated a satisfaction so selfish that it almost induced the young man to regret she had not failed. But when his eyes met the tearful and timid glances of the blushing Cecil, he felt that, provided she could be his without violence to her feelings, he cared but little at whose instigation she had consented.

"If I am to read my fate by your goodness, I know I may hope," he said, advancing to her side—"if in my own deserts, I am left to despair."

"Perhaps 'twas foolish, Lincoln," she said, smiling through her tears, and frankly placing her hand in his, "to hesitate about a few days, when I feel ready to devote my life to your happiness. It is the wish of my grandmother that I place myself under your protection."

"Then this evening unites us forever?"

"There is no obligation on your gallantry, that it should positively take place this very evening, if any or the least difficulties prevent."

"But none do, nor can," interrupted Lionel. "Happily the marriage forms of the colony are simple, and we enjoy the consent of all who have any right to interfere."

"Go, then, my children, and complete your brief arrangements," said Mrs. Lechmere; "'tis a solemn knot that ye tie! it must, it will be happy!"

Lionel pressed the hand of his intended bride, and withdrew; and Cecil, throwing herself into the arms of her grandmother, gave vent to her feelings in a burst of tears. Mrs. Lechmere did not repulse her child; on

the contrary, she pressed her once or twice to her heart; but still an observant spectator might have seen that her looks betrayed more of worldly pride than of those natural emotions which such a scene ought to have excited.

CHAPTER XXI.

"Come, friar Francis, be brief; only to the plain form of marriage."—*Much Ado about Nothing.*

MAJOR LINCOLN had justly said, the laws regulating marriages in Massachusetts, which were adapted to the infant state of the country, threw but few impediments in the way of the indissoluble connection. Cecil had, however, been educated in the bosom of the English Church, and she clung to its forms and ceremonies with an affection that may easily be accounted for in their solemnity and beauty. Notwithstanding the colonists often chose the weekly festival for their bridals, the rage of reform had excluded the altar from most of their temples, and it was not usual with them to celebrate their nuptials in the places of public worship. But there appeared so much of unreasonable haste, and so little of due preparation, in her own case, that Miss Dynevor, anxious to give all solemnity to an act to whose importance she was sensibly alive, expressed her desire to pronounce her vows at that altar where she had so long been used to worship, and under that roof where she had already, since the rising of the sun, poured out the thanksgivings of her pure spirit in behalf of the man who was so soon to become her husband.

As Mrs. Lechmere had declared that the agitation of the day, and her feeble condition, must unavoidably prevent her witnessing the ceremony, there existed no sufficient reason for not indulging the request of her grandchild, notwithstanding it was not in strict accordance with the customs of the place. But being married at the altar, and being married in public, were not similar duties; and in order to effect the one, and avoid the other, it was necessary to postpone the ceremony until a late hour, and to clothe the whole in a cloak of mystery, that the otherwise unembarrassed state of the parties would not have required.

Miss Dynevor made no other confidant than her cousin. Her feelings being altogether elevated above the ordinarily idle considerations which are induced by time and preparations on such an occasion, her brief arrangements were soon ended, and she awaited the appointed moment without alarm, if not without emotion.

Lionel had much more to perform. He knew that the least intimation of such a scene would collect a curious and a disagreeable crowd around and in the church, and he therefore determined that his plans should be arranged in silence, and managed secretly. In order to prevent a surprise, Meriton was sent to the clergyman, requesting him to appoint an hour in the evening when he could give an interview to Major Lincoln. He was answered, that at any moment after nine o'clock Dr. Liturgy would be released from the duties of the day, and in readiness to receive him. There was no alternative; and ten was the time mentioned to Cecil when she was requested to meet him before the altar. Major Lincoln distrusted a little the discretion of Polwarth, and he contented himself with merely telling his friend that he was to be married that evening, and that he must be careful to repair to Tremont Street in order to give away the bride; appointing an hour sufficiently early for all the subsequent movements. His groom and his valet had their respective and separate orders, and, long before the important moment, he had everything arranged, as he believed, beyond the possibility of a disappointment.

Perhaps there was something a little romantic, if not diseased, in the mind of Lionel, that caused him to derive a secret pleasure from the hidden movements he contemplated. He was certainly not entirely free from a touch of that melancholy and morbid humor, which has been mentioned as the characteristic of his race, nor did he always feel the less happy because he was a little miserable. However, either by his activity of intellect, or that excellent training in life he had undergone, by being required to act early for himself, he had so far succeeded in quelling the evil spirit within him, as to render its influence quite imperceptible to others, and nearly so to himself. It had, in fine, left him what we have endeavored to

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represent him in these pages, not a man without faults, but certainly one of many high and generous virtues.

As the day drew to a close, the small family party in Tremont Street collected in their usual manner to partake of the evening repast, which was common throughout the colonies at that period. Cecil was pale, and at times a slight tremor was perceptible in the little hand which did the offices of the table; but there was a forced calmness seated in her humid eyes, that betokened the resolution she had summoned to her assistance, in order to comply with the wishes of her grandmother. Agnes Danforth was silent and observant, though an occasional look, of more than usual meaning, betrayed what she thought of the mystery and suddenness of the approaching nuptials. It would seem, however, that the importance of the step she was about to take had served to raise the bride above the little affectations of her sex; for she spoke of the preparations like one who owned her interest in their completion, and who even dreaded that something might yet occur to mar them.

"If I were superstitious, and had faith in omens, Lincoln," she said, "the hour and the weather might well intimidate me from taking this step. See, the wind already blows across the endless wastes of the ocean, and the snow is driving through the streets in whirlwinds!"

"It is not yet too late to countermand my orders, Cecil," he said, regarding her anxiously; "I have made all my movements so like a great commander, that it is as easy to retrograde as to advance."

"Would you then retreat before one so little formidable as I?" she returned, smiling.

"You surely understand me as wishing only to change the place of our marriage. I dread exposing you and our kind cousin to the tempest, which, as you say, after sweeping over the ocean so long, appears rejoiced to find land on which to expend its fury."

"I have not misconstrued your meaning, Lionel, nor must you be mistaken in mine. I will become your wife to-night, and cheerfully too; for what reason can I have to doubt you now, more than formerly? But my vows must be offered at the altar."

Agnes, perceiving that her cousin spoke with a suppressed emotion that made utterance difficult, gayly interrupted her—

"And as for the snow, you know little of Boston girls, if you think an icicle has any terrors for them. I vow, Cecil, I do think you and I have been guilty, when children, of coasting in a hand-sled, down the side of Beacon, in a worse flurry than this."

"We were guilty of many mad and silly things at ten, that might not grace twenty, Agnes."

"Lord, how like a matron she speaks already!" interrupted the other, throwing up her eyes and clasping her hands in affected admiration; "nothing short of the church will satisfy so discreet a dame, Major Lincoln! so dismiss your cares on her account, and begin to enumerate the cloaks and overcoats necessary to your own preservation."

Lionel made a lively reply, when a dialogue of some spirit ensued between him and Agnes, to which even Cecil listened with a beguiled ear. When the evening had advanced, Polwarth made his appearance, suitably attired, and with a face that was sufficiently knowing and important for the occasion. The presence of the captain reminded Lionel of the lateness of the hour, and, without delay, he hastened to communicate his plans to his friend.

At a few minutes before ten, Polwarth was to accompany the ladies in a covered sleigh to the chapel, which was not a stone's throw from their residence, where the bridegroom was to be in readiness to receive them, with the divine. Referring the captain to Meriton for further instructions, and without waiting to hear the other express his amazement at the singularity of the plan, Major Lincoln said a few words of tender encouragement to Cecil, looked at his watch, and throwing his cloak around him, took his hat, and departed.

We shall leave Polwarth endeavoring to extract the meaning of all these mysterious movements from the wilful and amused Agnes, (Cecil having retired also,) and accompany the bridegroom in his progress towards the residence of the divine.

Major Lincoln found the streets entirely deserted. The night was not dark, for a full moon was wading among the volumes of clouds, which drove before the tempest in

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dark and threatening masses, that contrasted singularly and wildly to the light covering of the hills and buildings of the town. Occasionally the gusts of the wind would lift eddying wreaths of fine snow from some roof, and whole squares were wrapped in mist as the frozen vapor whistled by. At times, the gale howled among the chimneys and turrets, in a steady, sullen roaring; and there were again moments when the element appeared hushed, as if its fury were expended, and winter, having worked its might, was yielding to the steady, but insensible advances of spring. There was something in the season and the hour peculiarly in consonance with the excited temperament of the young bridegroom. Even the solitude of the streets, and the hollow rushing of the winds, the fleeting and dim light of the moon, which afforded passing glimpses of surrounding objects, and then was hid behind a dark veil of shifting vapor, contributed to his pleasure. He made his way through the snow, with that species of stern joy, to which all are indebted, at times, for moments of wild and pleasing self-abandonment. His thoughts vacillated between the purpose of the hour, and the unlooked-for coincidence of circumstances that had clothed it in a dress of such romantic mystery. Once or twice a painful and dark thought, connected with the secret of Mrs. Lechmere's life, found its way among his more pleasing visions, but it was quickly chased from his mind by the image of her who awaited his movements in such confiding faith, and with such secure and dependent affection.

As the residence of Dr. Liturgy was on the North-End, which was then one of the fashionable quarters of the town, the distance required that Lionel should be diligent, in order to be punctual to his appointment. Young, active, and full of hope, he passed along the unequal pavements with great rapidity, and had the satisfactien of perceiving by his watch, when admitted to the presence of the clergyman, that his speed had even outstripped the proverbial fleetness of time itself.

The reverend gentleman was in his study, consoling himself for the arduous duties of the day, with the comforts of a large easy-chair, a warm fire, and a pitcher filled with a mixture of cider and ginger, together with other articles that would have done credit to the knowledge of Polwarth in spices. His full and decorous wig was replaced by a velvet cap, his shoes were unbuckled, and his heels released from confinement. In short, all his arrangements were those of a man who having endured a day of labor, was resolved to prove the enjoyments of an evening of rest. His pipe, though filled, and on the little table by his side, was not lighted, in compliment to the guest he expected at that hour. As he was slightly acquainted with Major Lincoln, no introduction was necessary, and the two gentlemen were soon seated, the one endeavoring to overcome the embarrassment he felt on revealing his singular errand, and the other waiting, in no little curiosity, to learn the reason why a member of Parliament, and the heir of ten thousand a year, should come abroad on such an unpropitious night.

At length Lionel succeeded in making the astonished priest understand his wishes, and paused to hear the expected approbation of his proposal.

Dr. Liturgy had listened with the most profound attention, as if to catch some clew to explain the mystery of the extraordinary proceeding, and when the young man concluded, he unconsciously lighted his pipe, and began to throw out large clouds of smoke, like a man who felt there was a design to abridge his pleasures, and who was consequently determined to make the most of his time.

"Married! To be married in church! and after the night lecture!" he muttered in a low voice between his long-drawn puffs—"'tis my duty—certainly—Major Lincoln—to marry my parishioners——"

"In the present instance, as I know my request to be irregular, sir," interrupted the impatient Lionel, "I will make it your interest also." While speaking, he took a well-filled purse from his pocket, and, with an air of much delicacy, laid a small pile of gold by the side of the silver spectacle-case of the divine, as if to show him the difference in the value of the two metals.

Dr. Liturgy bowed his acknowledgments, and insensibly changed the stream of smoke to the opposite corner of his mouth, so as to leave the view of the glittering boon unob-

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structed. At the same time he raised the heel of one shoe, and threw an anxious glance at the curtained window, to inquire into the state of the weather.

"Could not the ceremony be performed at the house of Mrs. Lechmere?" he asked; "Miss Dynevor is a tender child, and I fear the cold air of the chapel might do her no service!"

"It is her wish to go to the altar, and you are sensible it is not my part to question her decision in such a matter."

"'Tis a pious inclination; though I trust she knows the distinction between the spiritual and the temporal church. The laws of the colonies are too loose on the subject of marriages, Major Lincoln; culpably and dangerously loose!"

"But as it is not in our power to alter, my good sir, will you permit me to profit by them, imperfect as they are?"

"Undeniably—it is part of my office to christen, to marry, and to bury; a duty which, I often say, covers the beginning, the middle, and the end of existence.—But permit me to help you to a little of my beverage, Major Lincoln—we call it 'Samson,' in Boston; you will find the 'Danite' a warm companion for a February night in this climate."

"The mixture is not aptly named, sir," said Lionel, after wetting his lips, "if strength be the quality most considered!"

"Ah! you have him from the lap of a Delilah, but it is unbecoming in one of my cloth to meddle with aught of the harlot."

He laughed at his own wit, and made a more spirituous than spiritual addition to his own glass, while he continued—

"We divide it into 'Samson with his hair off,' and 'Samson with his hair on;' and I believe myself the most orthodox in preferring the man of strength, in his native comeliness. I pledge you, Major Lincoln; may the middle of your days be as happy as the charming young lady you are about to espouse may well render them; and your end, sir, that of a good churchman, and a faithful subject."

Lionel, who considered this compliment as an indication of his success, now rose, and said a few words on the subject of their meeting in the chapel. The divine, who manifestly possessed no great relish for the duty, made sundry slight objections to the whole proceeding, which were, however, soon overcome by the arguments of the bridegroom. At length, every difficulty was happily adjusted, save one, and that the epicurean doctor stoutly declared to be a serious objection to acting in the matter. The church fires were suffered to go down, and his sexton had been taken from the chapel, that very evening, with every symptom on him of the terrible pestilence which then raged in the place, adding, by its danger, to the horrors and privations of the siege.

"A clear case of the small-pox, I do assure you, Major Lincoln," he continued, "and contracted, without doubt, from some emissaries sent into the town for that purpose, by the wicked devices of the rebels."

"I have heard that each party accuses the other of resorting to these unjustifiable means of annoyance," returned Lionel; "but, as I know our own leader to be above such baseness, I will not suspect any other man of it without proof."

"Too charitable by half, sir—much too charitable! But let the disease come whence it will, I fear my sexton will prove its victim."

"I will take the charge on myself of having the fires renewed," said Lionel; "the embers must yet be in the stoves, and we have still an hour of time before us."

As the clergyman was much too conscientious to retain possession of the gold without fully entitling himself to the ownership, he had long before determined to comply, notwithstanding the secret yearnings of his flesh. Their plans were now soon arranged, and Lionel, after receiving the key of the chapel, took his leave for a time.

When Major Lincoln found himself in the street again, he walked for some distance in the direction of the chapel, anxiously looking along the deserted way, in order to discover an unemployed soldier who might serve to perform the menial offices of the absent sexton. He proceeded for some distance without success; for everything human seemed housed, even the number of lights in the windows beginning to decrease in a manner which denoted that the usual hour of rest had arrived. He had paused in the entrance

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of the Dock Square, uncertain where to apply for an assistant, when he caught a glimpse of the figure of a man, crouching under the walls of the old turreted warehouse, so often mentioned. Without hesitating an instant, he approached the spot, from which the figure neither moved, nor did it indeed betray any other evidence of a consciousness of his proximity. Notwithstanding the dimness of the moon, there was light enough to detect the extreme misery of the object before him. His tattered and thin attire sufficiently bespoke the motive of the stranger for seeking a shelter from the cutting winds behind an angle of the wall, while his physical wants were betrayed by the eager manner in which he gnawed at a bone that might well have been rejected from the mess of the meanest private, notwithstanding the extreme scarcity that prevailed in the garrison. Lionel forgot for a moment his present object, at this exhibition of human suffering, and with a kind voice he addressed the wretched being.

"You have a cold spot to eat your supper in, my friend," he said; "and it would seem, too, but a scanty meal."

Without ceasing to masticate his miserable nutriment, or even raising his eyes, the other said, in a growling voice—

"The king could shut up the harbor, and keep out the ships; but he hasn't the might to drive cold weather from Boston, in the month of March!"

"As I live, Job Pray! Come with me, boy, and I will give you a better meal, and a warmer place to enjoy it in—but first tell me; can you procure a lantern and a light from your mother?"

"You can't go in the ware'us' to-night," returned the lad positively.

"Is there no place at hand, then, where such things might be purchased?"

"They keep them there," said Job, pointing sullenly to a low building on the opposite side of the square, through one of the windows of which a faint light was glimmering.

"Then take this money, and go buy them for me, without delay."

Job hesitated with ill-concealed reluctance.

"Go, fellow, I have instant need of them, and you can keep the change for your reward."

The young man no longer betrayed any indisposition to go, but answered with great promptitude, for one of his imbecile mind—

"Job will go, if you will let him buy Nab some meat with the change?"

"Certainly, buy what you will with it; and furthermore, I promise you, that neither your mother nor yourself shall want again for food or clothing."

"Job's a-hungry," said the simpleton; "but they say hunger don't come as craving upon a young stomach as upon an old one. Do you think the king knows what it is to be a-cold and hungry?"

"I know not, boy—but I know full well that if one suffering like you were before him, his heart would yearn to relieve him. Go, go, and buy yourself food too, if they have it."

In a very few minutes Lionel saw the simpleton issuing from the house to which he had run at his bidding, with the desired lantern.

"Did you get any food?" said Lionel, motioning to Job to precede him with the light —"I trust you did not entirely forget yourself in your haste to serve me."

"Job hopes he didn't catch the pestilence," returned the lad, eating at the same time voraciously of a small roll of bread.

"Catch what? what is it you hope you did not catch?

"The pestilence—they are full of the foul disorder in that house."

"Do you mean the small-pox, boy?"

"Yes; some call it small-pox, and some call it the foul disorder, and some other the pestilence. The king can keep out the trade, but he can't keep out the cold and the pestilence from Boston—but when the people get the town back, they'll know what to do with it—they'll send it all to the pest-houses!"

"I hope I have not exposed you unwittingly to danger, Job—it would have been better had I gone myself; for I was inoculated for the terrible disease in my infancy."

Job, who, in expressing his sense of the danger, had exhausted the stores of his feeble mind on the subject, made no reply, but continued walking through the square, until they reached its termination, when he turned, and inquired which way he was to go.

"To the church," said Lionel, "and swiftly, lad."

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As they entered Cornhill, they encountered the fury of the wind, when Major Lincoln, bowing his head, and gathering his cloak about him, followed the light which flitted along the pavement in his front. Shut out in a manner from the world by this covering, his thoughts returned to their former channel, and in a few moments he forgot where he was, or whom he was following. He was soon awakened from his abstraction by perceiving that it was necessary for him to ascend a few steps, when, supposing he had reached the place of destination, he raised his head, and unthinkingly followed his conductor into the tower of a large edifice. Immediately perceiving his mistake, by the difference of the architecture from that of the King's Chapel, he reproved the lad for his folly, and demanded why he had brought him thither.

"This is what you call a church," said Job, "though I call it a meetin'us'.—It's no wonder you don't know it—for what the people built for a temple, the king has turned into a stable!"

"A stable!" exclaimed Lionel.—Perceiving a strong smell of horses in the place, he advanced and threw open the inner door, when, to his amazement, he perceived that he stood in an area fitted for the exercises of the cavalry. There was no mistaking the place, nor its uses. The naked galleries, and many of the original ornaments, were standing; but the accommodations below were destroyed, and in their places the floor had been covered with earth, for horses and their riders to practise in the cavesson. The abominations of the place even now offended his senses, as he stood on that spot where he remembered so often to have seen the grave and pious colonists assemble in crowds to worship. Seizing the lantern from Job, he hurried out of the building, with a disgust that even the unobservant simpleton had no difficulty in discovering. On reaching the street, his eyes fell upon the lights, and on the silent dignity of the Province House, and he was compelled to recollect, that this wanton violation of the feelings of the colonists had been practised directly under the windows of the royal governor.

"Fools, fools!" he muttered, bitterly; "when ye should have struck like men, ye have trifled as children; and ye have forgotten your manhood, and even your God, to indulge your besotted spleen!"

"And now these very horses are starving for want of hay, as a judgment upon them!" said Job, who shuffled his way industriously at the other's side.—"They had better have gone to meetin' themselves, and heard the expounding, than to set dumb beasts a rioting in a place that the Lord used to visit so often!"

"Tell me, boy, of what other act of folly and madness has the army been guilty?"

"What! hav'n't you heard of the Old North? They've made oven-wood of the grandest temple in the Bay! If they dared, they'd lay their ungodly hands on old Funnel itself!"

Lionel made no reply. He had heard that the distresses of the garrison, heightened as they were by the ceaseless activity of the Americans, had compelled them to convert many houses, as well as the church in question, into fuel. But he saw in the act nothing more than the usual recourse of a common military exigency. It was free from that reckless contempt of a people's feelings, which was exhibited in the prostitution of the ancient walls of the sister edifice, which was known throughout New England with a species of veneration, as the "Old South." He continued his way gloomily along the silent streets, until he reached the more favored temple, in which the ritual of the English Church was observed, and whose roof was rendered doubly sacred in the eyes of the garrison, by the accidental circumstance of bearing the title of their earthly monarch.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo; down!"
—*Macbeth.*

Major Lincoln found the King's Chapel differing in every particular from the venerable, but prostituted building he had just quitted. As he entered, the light of his lantern played over the rich scarlet covering of many a pew, and glanced upon the glittering ornaments of the polished organ, which now slumbered in as chilled a silence as the

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dead, which lay in such multitudes within and without the massive walls. The labored columns, with their slender shafts and fretted capitals, threw shapeless shadows across the dim background, peopling the galleries and ceiling with imaginary phantoms of thin air. As this slight delusion passed away, he became sensible of the change in the temperature. The warmth was not yet dissipated which had been maintained during the different services of the day; for, notwithstanding the wants of the town and garrison, the favored temple, where the representative of the sovereign was wont to worship, knew not the ordinary privations of the place. Job was directed to supply the dying embers of the stoves with fresh fuel, and as the simpleton well knew where to find the stores of the church, his office was performed with an alacrity that was not a little increased by his own sufferings.

When the bustle of preparation had subsided, Lionel drew a chair from the chancel, while Job crouched by the side of the quivering iron he had heated, in that attitude he was wont to assume, and which so touchingly expressed the secret consciousness he felt of his own inferiority. As the grateful warmth diffused itself over the half-naked frame of the simpleton, his head sunk upon his bosom, and he was fast falling into a slumber, like a worried hound that had at length found ease and shelter. A more active mind would have wished to learn the reasons that could induce his companion to seek such an asylum at that unseasonable hour. But Job was a stranger to curiosity; nor did the occasional glimmerings of his mind often extend beyond those holy precepts which had been taught him with such care, before disease had sapped his faculties, or those popular principles of the time, that formed so essential a portion of the thoughts of every New England man.

Not so with Major Lincoln. His watch told him that many weary minutes must elapse before he could expect to receive his bride; and he disposed himself to wait, with as much patience as comported with five-and-twenty and the circumstances. In a short time the stillness of the chapel was restored, interrupted only by the passing gusts of the wind without, and the dull roaring of the furnace, by whose side Job slumbered in a state of happy oblivion.

Lionel endeavored to still his truant thoughts, and bring them in training for the solemn ceremony in which he was soon to be an actor. Finding the task too difficult, he arose, and approaching a window, looked out upon the solitude, and the whirlwinds of snow that drifted through the streets, eagerly listening for those sounds of approach which his reason told him he ought not yet to expect. Again he seated himself, and turned his eyes inquiringly about him, with a sort of inward apprehension that some one lay concealed in the surrounding gloom, with a secret design to mar his approaching happiness. There was so much of wild and feverish romance in the incidents of the day, that he found it difficult, at moments, to credit their reality, and had recourse to hasty glances at the altar, his attire, and even his insensible companion, to remove the delusion from his mind. Again he looked upward at the unsteady and huge shadows which wavered along the ceiling of the walls, and his former apprehensions of some hidden evil were revived with a vividness that amounted nearly to a presentiment. So uneasy did he become at length, under this impression, that he walked along the distant aisles, scrupulously looking into the dark pews, and throwing a scrutinizing glance behind each column, and was rewarded for his trouble by hearing the hollow echo of his own footsteps.

Returning from this round, he approached the stove, and yielded to a strong desire of listening to the voice of even Job, in a moment of such morbid excitement. Touching the simpleton lightly with his foot, the other awoke with that readiness which denoted the sudden and disturbed nature of his ordinary rest.

"You are unusually dull to-night, Job," said Lionel, endeavoring to hush his uneasiness in affected pleasantry, "or you would inquire the reason why I pay my visit to the church at this extraordinary hour."

"Boston folks love their meetin'us's," returned the obtuse simpleton.

"Ay! but they love their beds, too, fellow; and one half of them are now enjoying what you seem to covet so much."

"Job loves to eat, and to be warm!"

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"And to sleep too, if one may judge by your drowsiness."

"Yes, sleep is sweet; Job don't feel a-hungered when he's sleeping."

Lionel remained silent, for several moments, under a keen perceptions of the suffering exhibited in the touching helplessness, which marked the manner of the other, before he continued—

"But I expect to be joined soon by the clergyman, and some ladies, and Captain Polwarth."

"Job likes Captain Polwarth—he keeps a grand sight of provisions!"

"Enough of this! can you think of nothing but your stomach, boy?"

"God made hunger," said Job gloomily, "and he made food too; but the king keeps it all for his rake-hellies!"

"Well, listen, and be attentive to what I tell you.—One of the ladies who will come here is Miss Dynevor; you know Miss Dynevor, Job? the beautiful Miss Dynevor!"

The charms of Cecil had not, however, made their wonted impression on the dull eye of the idiot, who still regarded the speaker with his customary air of apathy.

"Surely, Job, you know Miss Dynevor!" repeated Lionel, with an irritability that, at any other time, he would have been the first to smile at—"she has often given you money and clothes."

"Yes; Ma'am Lechmere is her grandam!"

This was certainly one of the least recommendations his mistress possessed, in the eyes of Lionel, who paused a moment, with inward vexation, before he added—

"Let who will be her relatives, she is this night to become my wife. You will remain and witness the ceremony, and then you will extinguish the lights, and return the key of the church to Dr. Liturgy. In the morning come to me for your reward."

The changeling arose, with an air of singular importance, and answered—

"To be sure. Major Lincoln is to be married, and he asks Job to the wedding! Now Nab may preach her sarmons about pride and flaunty feelings as much as she will; but blood is blood, and flesh is flesh, for all her sayings!"

Struck by the expression of wild meaning that gleamed in the eyes of the simpleton, Major Lincoln demanded an explanation of his ambiguous language. But ere Job had leisure to reply, though his vacant look again denoted that his thoughts were already contracting themselves within their usually narrow limits, a sudden noise drew the attention of both to the entrance of the chapel. The door opened the next instant, and the figure of the divine, powdered with drifted snow, and encased in various defences against the cold, was seen, moving with a becoming gravity, through the principal aisle. Lionel hastened to receive him, and to conduct him to the seat he had just occupied himself.

When Dr. Liturgy had uncloaked, and appeared in his robes of office, the benevolence of his smile, and the whole expression of his countenance, denoted that he was satisfied with the condition in which he found the preparations.

"There is no reason why a church should not be as comfortable as a man's library, Major Lincoln," he said, hitching his seat a little nearer to the stove. "It is a puritanical and a dissenting idea, that religion has anything forbidding or gloomy in its nature; and wherefore should we assemble amid pains and inconvenience to discharge its sacred offices."

"Quite true, sir," returned Lionel, looking anxiously through one of the windows—"I have not yet heard the hour of ten strike, though my watch tells me it is time!"

"The weather readers the public clocks very irregular. There are so many unavoidable evils to which flesh is heir, that we should endeavor to be happy on all occasions—indeed it is a duty——"

"It's not in the natur of sin to make fallen man happy," said a low, growling voice from behind the stove.

"Ha! what! did you speak, Major Lincoln—a very singular sentiment for a bridegroom!" muttered the divine.

"'Tis that weak young man, whom I have brought hither to assist me with the fires, repeating some of the lore of his mother; nothing else, sir."

By this time Dr. Liturgy had caught a glimpse of the crouching Job, and comprehending the interruption, he fell back in his chair, smiling superciliously, as he continued—

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"I know the lad, sir; I should know him. He is learned in the texts, and somewhat given to disputation in matters of religion. 'Tis a pity the little intellect he has had not been better managed in his infancy; but they have helped to crush his feeble mind with their subtleties. We—I mean we of the established church—often style him the Boston Calvin—ha, ha, ha!—Old Cotton was not his equal in subtilty!—But speaking of the establishment, do you not fancy that one of the consequences of this rebellion will be to extend its benefits to the colonies, and that we may look forward to the period when the true Church shall possess its inheritance in these religious provinces?"

"Oh, most certainly!" said Lionel, again walking anxiously to the window; "would to God they had come!"

The divine, with whom weddings were matters of too frequent occurrence to awaken his sympathies, understood the impatient bridegroom literally, and replied, accordingly—

"I am glad to hear you say it, Major Lincoln, and I hope, when the act of amnesty shall be passed, to find your vote on the side of such a condition."

At this instant Lionel caught a glimpse of the well-known sleigh, moving slowly along the deserted street, and, uttering a cry of pleasure, he rushed to the door to receive his bride. Dr. Liturgy finished his sentence to himself, and, rising from his comfortable position, he took the light, and entered the chancel. The disposition of the candles having been previously made, when they were lighted, his book opened his robes adjusted, and his features settled into a suitable degree of solemnity, he stood, waiting with becoming dignity the approach of those over whom he was to pronounce the nuptial benediction. Job placed himself within the shadows of the building, and stood regarding the attitude and imposing aspect of the priest, with a species of childish awe.

Then came a group, emerging from the obscurity of the distant part of the church, and moving slowly towards the altar. Cecil was in front, leaning on that arm which Lionel had given her, as much for support, as through courtesy. She had removed her outer and warmer garments in the vestibule of the sacred edifice, and now appeared, attired in a manner as well suited to the suddenness and privacy, as to the importance, of the ceremony. A mantle of satin, trimmed with delicate furs, fell carelessly from her shoulders, partly concealing by its folds the exquisite proportions of her slender form. Beneath was a vestment of the same rich material, cut, after the fashions of that period, in a manner to give the exact outlines of the bust. Across the stomacher were deep rows of fine lace, and wide borders of the same valuable texture followed the retiring edges of her robe, leaving the costly dress within partly exposed to the eye. But the beauty and simplicity of her attire (it was simple for that day) was lost, or, rather, it served to adorn, unnoticed, the melancholy beauty of her countenance.

As they approached the expecting priest, Cecil threw, by a gentle movement, her mantle on the rails of the chancel, and accompanied Lionel, with a firmer tread than before, to the foot of the altar. Her cheeks were pale; but it was rather with a compelled resolution than dread, while her eyes were full of tenderness and thought. Of the two devotees of Hymen, she exhibited, if not the most composure, certainly the most singleness of purpose, and intentness on the duty before them; for while the looks of Lionel were stealing uneasily about the building, as if he expected some hidden object to start up out of the darkness, hers was riveted on the priest in sweet and earnest attention.

They paused in their allotted places; and after a moment was allowed for Agnes and Polwarth, who alone followed, to enter the chancel, the low but deep tones of the minister were heard in the solemn stillness of the place.

Dr. Liturgy had borrowed a suitable degree of inspiration from the dreariness of the hour, and the solitude of the building where he was required to discharge his sacred functions. As he delivered the opening exhortation of the service, he made long and frequent pauses between the members of the sentences, giving to each injunction a distinct and impressive emphasis. But when he came to those closing words—

"*If any man can show just cause why they*

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may not be lawfully joined together, let him now speak, or else, hereafter, forever hold his peace."

He lifted his voice, and raised his eyes to the more distant parts of the chapel, as though he addressed a multitude in the gloom. The faces of all present involuntarily followed the direction of his gaze, and a moment of deep expectation, which can only be explained by the singularly wild character of the scene, succeeded the reverberations of his tones. At that moment, when each had taken breath, and all were again turning to the altar, a huge shadow rose upon the gallery, and extended itself along the ceiling, until its gigantic proportions were seen hovering, like an evil spectre, nearly above them.

The clergyman suspended the half-uttered sentence. Cecil grasped the arm of Lionel convulsively, while a shudder passed through her frame that seemed about to shake it to dissolution.

The shadowy image then slowly withdrew, not without, however, throwing out a fantastic gesture, with an arm which stretched itself across the vaulted roof, and down the walls, as if about to clutch its victims beneath.

"If any man can show just cause why they may not be lawfully joined together, let him now speak, or else, hereafter, forever hold his peace," repeated the priest aloud, as if he would summon the universe at the challenge.

Again the shadow rose, presenting this time the strong and huge lineaments of a human face, which it was not difficult, at such a moment, to fancy possessed even expression and life. Its strongly-marked features seemed to work with powerful emotion, and the lips moved as if the airy being was speaking to unearthly ears. Next came two arms, raised above the gazing group, with clasped hands, as in the act of benediction, after which the whole vanished, leaving the ceiling in its own dull white, and the building still as the graves which surrounded it.

Once more the excited minister uttered the summons; and again every eye was drawn, by a secret impulse, to a spot which seemed to possess the form, without the substance, of a human being. But the shadow was seen no more. After waiting several moments in vain, Dr. Liturgy proceeded, with a voice in which a growing tremor was very perceptible; but no further interruption was experienced to the end of the service.

Cecil pronounced her vows, and plighted her troth, in tones of holy emotion; while Lionel, who was prepared for some strange calamity, went through the service to the end, with a forced calmness. They were married; and when the blessing was uttered, not a sound nor a whisper was heard in the party. Silently they all turned away from the spot, and prepared to leave the place. Cecil stood passively, and permitted Lionel to wrap her form in the folds of her mantle with tender care; and when she would have smiled her thanks for the attention, she merely raised her anxious eyes to the ceiling, with an expression that could not be mistaken. Even Polwarth was mute; and Agnes forgot to offer those congratulations and good wishes, with which her heart had so recently been swelling.

The clergyman muttered a few words of caution to Job concerning the candles and the fire, and hurried after the retiring party with a quickness of step that he was willing to ascribe to the lateness of the hour, and with a total disregard to the safety of the edifice; leaving the chapel to the possession of the ill-gifted, but undisturbed son of Abigail Pray.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all;
Close up his eyes, and draw the curtain close;
And let us all to meditation."—*King Henry VI.*

THE bridal party entered their little vehicle silent and thoughtful; the voice of Polwarth being alone audible, as he gave a few low and hurried orders to the groom who was in waiting. Dr. Liturgy approached for a moment, and made his compliments, when the sleigh darted away from the door of the building, as swiftly as if the horse that drew it partook of the secret uneasiness of those it held. The movements of the divine, though less rapid, were equally diligent, and in less than a minute the winds whistled, and clouds of snow were driven through a street, which everything possessing life appeared once more to have abandoned.

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The instant Polwarth had discharged his load at the door of Mrs. Lechmere, he muttered something of "happiness and to-morrow," which his friend did not understand, and dashed through the gate of the court-yard, at the same mad rate that he had driven from the church. On entering the house, Agnes repaired to the room of her aunt, to report that the marriage knot was tied, while Lionel led his silent bride into the empty parlor.

Cecil stood, fixed and motionless as a statue, while her husband removed her cloak and mantle; her cheeks pale, her eyes riveted on the floor, and her whole attitude and manner exhibiting the intensity of thought, which had been created by the scene in which she had just been an actor. When he had relieved her light form from the load of garments in which it had been enveloped by his care, he impelled her gently to a seat by his side, on the settee, and, for the first time since she had uttered the final vow at the altar, she spoke—

"Was it a fearful omen?" she whispered, as he folded her to his heart, "or was it no more than a horrid fancy?"

"'Twas nothing, love—'twas a shadow—that of Job Pray, who was with me to light the fires."

"No—no—no," said Cecil, speaking with the rapidity of high excitement, and in tones that gathered strength as she proceeded—"Those were never the unmeaning features of the miserable simpleton! Know you, Lincoln, that in the haughty, the terrific outlines of those dreadful lineaments on the wall, I fancied a resemblance to the profile of our great uncle, your father's predecessor in the title—Dark Sir Lionel, as he was called."

"It was easy to fancy anything, at such a time, and under such circumstances. Do not cloud the happiness of our bridal by these gloomy fancies."

"Am I gloomy or superstitious by habit, Lionel?" she asked, with a deprecating tenderness in her voice, that touched his inmost heart—"But it came at such a moment, and in such a shape, that I should be more than woman not to tremble at its terrible import!"

"What is it you dread, Cecil? Are we not married; lawfully, solemnly united?"—The bride shuddered; but perceiving her unwilling, or unable to answer, he continued—"beyond the power of man to sever; and with the consent, nay, by the earnest wish, the command, of the only being who can have a right to express a wish, or have an opinion on the subject?"

"I believe—that is, I think, it is all as you say, Lionel, returned Cecil, still looking about her with a vacant and distressed air, that curdled his blood; "yes—yes, we are certainly married; and oh! how ardently do I implore Him who sees and governs all things, that our union may be blessed! but——"

"But what, Cecil? will you let a thing of naught—a shadow—affect you in this manner?"

"'Twas a shadow, as you say, Lincoln; but where was the substance?"

"Cecil, my sensible, my good, my pious, Cecil, why do your faculties slumber in this unaccountable apathy? Ask your own excellent reason; can there be a shade where nothing obstructs the light?"

"I know not. I cannot reason—I have not reason. All things are possible to Him, whose will is law, and whose slightest wish shakes the universe. There was a shadow—a dark, a speaking, and a terrible shadow; but who can say, where was the reality?"

"I had almost answered, with the phantom, only in your own sensitive imagination, love. But arouse your slumbering powers, Cecil, and reflect how possible it was for some curious idler of the garrison to have watched my movements, and to have secreted himself in the chapel; perhaps from wanton mischief—perhaps without motive of any kind."

"He then chose an awful moment in which to act his gambols!"

"It may have been one whose knowledge was just equal to giving a theatrical effect to his silly deception. But are we to be cheated of our happiness by such weak devices; or to be miserable because Boston contains a fool?"

"I may be weak, and silly, and even impious in this terror, Lincoln," she said, turning her softened looks upon his anxious face, and attempting to smile; "but it is assailing a woman in a point where she is most sensitive.—You know that I have no reserve with you, now. Marriage with us is

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the tie that 'that binds all charities in one,' and at the moment when the heart is full of its own security, is it not dreadful to have such mysterious presages, be they true, or be they false, answering to the awful appeal of the church!"

"Nor is the tie less binding, less important, or less dear, my own Cecil, to us. Believe me, whatever the pride of manhood may say of high destinies, and glorious deeds, the same affections are deeply seated in our nature, and must be soothed by those we love, and not by those who contribute to our vanity. Why then permit this chill to blight your best affections in their budding?"

There was so much that was soothing to the anxiety of a bride, in his sentiments, and so much of tender interest in his manner, that he at length succeeded, in a great degree, in luring Cecil from her feverish apprehensions. As he spoke, a mantling bloom diffused itself over her cold and pallid cheeks, and when he had done, her eyes lighted with the glow of a woman's confidence, and were turned on his own in bright but blushing pleasure. She repeated his word "chill," with an emphasis and a smile that could not be misconstrued, and in a few minutes he entirely succeeded in quelling the uneasy presentiments that had gained a momentary ascendency over her clear and excellent faculties.

But notwithstanding Major Lincoln reasoned so well, and with so much success, against the infirmity of his bride, he was by no means equal to maintain as just an argument with himself. The morbid sensibility of his mind had been awakened in a most alarming manner by the occurrences of the evening, though his warm interest in the happiness of Cecil had enabled him to smother them, so long as he witnessed the extent and nature of her apprehensions. But, exactly in the proportion, as he persuaded her into forgetfulness of the past, his recollections became more vivid and keen; and notwithstanding his art, he might not have been able to conceal the workings of his troubled thoughts from his companion, had not Agnes appeared, and announced the desire of Mrs. Lechmere to receive the bride and bridegroom in her sick chamber.

"Come, Lincoln," said his lovely companion, rising at the summons, "we have been selfish in forgetting how strongly my grandmother sympathizes in our good or evil fortunes. We should have discharged this duty without waiting to be reminded of it."

Without making any other reply than a fond pressure of the hand he held, Lionel drew her arm through his own, and followed Agnes into the little hall which conducted to the upper part of the dwelling.

"You know the way, Major Lincoln," said Miss Danforth; "and should you not, my lady bride can show you. I must go and cast a worldly eye on the little banquet I have ordered, but which I fear will be labor thrown away, since Captain Polwarth has disdained to exhibit his prowess at the board. Truly, Major Lincoln, I marvel that a man of so much substance as your friend, should be frightened from his stomach by a shadow!"

Cecil even laughed, and in those sweet feminine tones that are infectious, at the humor of her cousin; but the dark and anxious expression that gathered round the brow of her husband as suddenly checked her mirth.

"Let us ascend, Lincoln," she said, instantly, "and leave mad Agnes to her household cares, and her folly."

"Ay, go," cried the other, turning away toward the supper-room—"eating and drinking is not ethereal enough for your elevated happiness; would I had a repast worthy of such sentimental enjoyment! Let me see—dew drops and lovers' tears, in equal quantities, sweetened by Cupid's smiles, with a dish of sighs, drawn by moonlight, for piquancy, as Polwarth would say, would flavor a bowl to their tastes. The dew drops might be difficult to procure, at this inclement season, and in such a night; but if sighs and tears would serve alone, poor Boston is just now rich enough in materials!"

Lionel, and his half-blushing, half-smiling companion, heard the dying sounds of her voice, as she entered the distant apartment, expressing, by its tones, the mingled pleasantry and spleen of its mistress, and in the next instant they forgot both Agnes and her humor, as they found themselves in the presence of Mrs. Lechmere.

The first glance of his eye at their expect-

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ing relative, brought a painful throb to the heart of Major Lincoln. Mrs. Lechmere had caused herself to be raised in her bed, in which she was seated nearly upright, supported by pillows. Her wrinkled and emaciated cheeks were flushed with an unnatural color, that contrasted too violently with the marks which age and strong passions had impressed, with their indelible fingers, on the surrounding wreck of those haughty features, which had once been distinguished for great, if not attractive beauty. Her hard eyes had lost their ordinary expression of worldly care, in a brightness which caused them rather to glare than beam, with flashes of unbridled satisfaction that could no longer be repressed. In short, her whole appearance brought a startling conviction to the mind of the young man, that whatever might have been the ardor of his own feelings in espousing her grandchild, he had at length realized the fondest desires of a being so worldly, so designing, and, as he was now made keenly to remember, of one also, who, he had much reason to apprehend, was so guilty. The invalid did not seem to think a concealment of her exultation any longer necessary; for, stretching out her arms, she called to her child, in a voice raised above its natural tones, and which was dissonant and harsh from a sort of unholy triumph—

"Come to my arms, my pride, my hope, my dutiful, my deserving daughter! Come and receive a parent's blessing; that blessing which you so much deserve!"

Even Cecil, warm and consoling as was the language of her grandmother, hesitated an instant at the unnatural voice in which the summons was uttered, and advanced to meet her embrace with a manner less warm than was usual to her own ardent and unsuspecting nature. This secret restraint existed, however, but for a moment; for when she felt the encircling arms of Mrs. Lechmere pressing her warmly to her aged bosom, she looked up into the face of her grandmother, as if to thank her for so much affection, by her own guileless smiles and tears.

"Here, then, Major Lincoln, you possess my greatest, I had almost said my only treasure!" added Mrs. Lechmere—"she is a good, a gentle, and dutiful child; and heaven will bless her for it, as I do." Leaning forward, she continued in a less excited voice—"Kiss me, my Cecil, my bride, my Lady Lincoln! for by that loved title I may now call you, as yours in the course of nature, it soon will be."

Cecil, greatly shocked at the unguarded exultation of her grandmother, gently withdrew herself from her arms, and with eyes bent to the floor in shame, and burning cheeks, she willingly moved aside to allow Lionel to approach, and receive his share of the congratulations. He stooped to bestow the cold and reluctant kiss, which the offered cheek of Mrs. Lechmere invited, and muttered a few incoherent words concerning his present happiness, and the obligation she had conferred. Notwithstanding the high and disgusting triumph which had broken through the usually cold and cautious manner of the invalid, a powerful and unbidden touch of nature mingled in her address to the bridegroom. The fiery and unnatural glow of her eyes even softened with a tear, as she spoke—

"Lionel, my nephew, my son," she said—"I have endeavored to receive you in a manner worthy of the head of an ancient and honorable name; but were you a sovereign prince, I have now done my last and best in your favor. Cherish her—love her—be more than husband—be all of kin to the precious child, for she merits all! Now is my latest wish fulfilled!—Now may I prepare myself for the last great change, in the quiet of a long and tranquil evening to the weary and troublesome day of life!"

"Woman!" said a tremulous voice in the background—"thou deceivest thyself!"

"Who," exclaimed Mrs. Lechmere, raising her body with a convulsive start, as if about to leap from the bed—"who is it speaks?"

"'Tis I," returned the well-remembered tones of Ralph, as he advanced from the door to the foot of her couch—"'tis I, Priscilla Lechmere; one who knows thy merits and thy doom!"

The appalled woman fell back on her pillows, gasping for breath, the flush of her cheeks giving place to their former signs of age and disease, and her eye loosing its high exultation in the glazed look of sudden terror. It would seem, however, that a single moment of reflection was sufficient to restore her spirit, and with it all her deep resentments.

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She motioned the intruder away, by a violent gesture of the hand, and after an effort to command her utterance, she said, in a voice rendered doubly strong by overwhelming passion—

"Why am I braved, at such a moment, in the privacy of my sick chamber? Have that madman, or impostor, whichever he may be, removed from my presence!"

She uttered her request to deadened ears. Lionel neither moved nor answered. His whole attention was given to Ralph, across whose hollow features a smile of calm indifference passed, which denoted how little he regarded the threatened violence. Even Cecil, who clung to the arm of Lionel, with all a woman's dependence on him she loved, was unnoticed by the latter, in the absorbing interest he took in the sudden re-appearance of one whose singular and mysterious character had long since raised such hopes and fears in his own bosom.

"Your doors will shortly be opened to all who may choose to visit here," the old man coldly answered; "why should I be driven from a building where heartless crowds shall so soon enter and depart at will! Am I not old enough; or do I not bear enough of the aspect of the grave, to become your companion? Priscilla Lechmere, you have lived till the bloom of your cheeks has given place to the color of the dead; your dimples have become furrowed and wrinkled lines; and the beams of your once bright eye have altered to the dull look of care—but you have not yet lived for repentance."

"What manner of language is this," cried his wondering listener, inwardly shrinking before his steady, but glowing look. "Why am I singled from the world for this persecution? —are my sins past bearing; or am I alone to be reminded that sooner or later age and death will come?—I have long known the infirmities of life, and may truly say that I am prepared for their final consequences."

"'Tis well," returned the unmoved and apparently immovable intruder—"take, then, and read the solemn decree of thy God; and may He grant thee firmness to justify so much confidence."

As he spoke, he extended, in his withered hand, an open letter toward Mrs. Lechmere, which the quick glance of Lionel told him bore his own name in the superscription. Notwithstanding the gross invasion of his rights, the young man was passive under the detection of this second and gross interference of the other in his most secret matters, watching with eager interest the effect the strange communication would produce on his aunt.

Mrs. Lechmere took the letter from the stranger with a sort of charmed submission, which denoted how completely his solemn manner had bent her to his will. The instant her look fell on the contents, it became fixed and wild. The note was, however, short, and the scrutiny was soon ended. Still she grasped it with an extended arm, though the vacant expression of her countenance betrayed that it was held before an insensible eye. A moment of silent and breathless wonder followed. It was succeeded by a shudder which passed through the whole frame of the invalid, her limbs shaking violently, until the rattling of the folds of paper was audible in the most distant corner of the apartment.

"This bears my name," cried Lionel, shocked at her emotions, and taking the paper from her unresisting hand, "and should first have met my eye."

"Aloud—aloud, dear Lionel," said a faint but earnest whisper at his elbow; "aloud, I implore you, aloud!"

It was not, perhaps, so much in compliance with this affecting appeal, in which the whole soul of Cecil seemed wrapped, as by yielding to the overwhelming flow of that excitement to which he had been aroused, that Major Lincoln was led to conform to her request. In a voice rendered desperately calm by his emotions, he uttered the fatal contents of the note, in tones so distinct, that they sounded to his wife, in the stillness of the place, like the prophetic warnings of one from the dead.

"The state of the town has prevented that close attention to the case of Mrs. Lechmere, which her injuries rendered necessary. An inward mortification has taken place, and her present ease is only the forerunner of her death. I feel it my duty to say, that though she may live many hours, it is not improbable that she will die to-night."

To this short, but terrible annunciation, was placed the well-known signature of the

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attending physician. Here was a sudden change, indeed! All had thought that the disease had given way, when it seemed it had been preying insidiously on the vitals of the sick. Dropping the note, Lionel exclaimed aloud, in the suddenness of his surprise—

"Die to-night! This is an unexpected summons, indeed!"

The miserable woman, after the first nerveless moment of her dismay, turned her looks anxiously from face to face, and listened intently to the words of the note, as they fell from the lips of Lionel, like one eager to detect the glimmerings of hope in the alarmed expression of their countenances. But the language of her physician was too plain, direct, and positive, to be misunderstood or perverted. Its very coldness gave it a terrific character of truth.

"Do you then credit it?" she asked in a voice whose husky tones betrayed but too plainly her abject unwillingness to be assured. "You! Lionel Lincoln, whom I had thought my friend."

Lionel turned away silently from the sad spectacle of her misery; but Cecil dropped on her knees at the bed-side, and clasping her hands, she elevated them, looking like a beautiful picture of pious hope, as she murmured—

"He is no friend, dearest grandmother, who would lay flattery to a parting soul! But there is a better and a safer dependence than all this world can offer!"

"And you, too!" cried the devoted woman, rousing herself with a strength and energy that would seem to put the professional knowledge of her medical attendant at defiance—"do you also abandon me? you, whom I have watched in infancy, nursed in suffering, fondled in happiness, ay! and reared in virtue—yes, that I can say boldly in the face of the universe!—you, whom I have brought to this honorable marriage; would you repay me for all, by black ingratitude?"

"My grandmother! my grandmother! talk not thus cruelly to your child! But lean on the Rock of Ages for support, even as I have leaned on thee!"

"Away—away—weak, foolish child! Excess of happiness has maddened thee! Come hither, my son; let us speak of Ravenscliffe, the proud seat of our ancestors; and of those days we are yet to pass under its hospitable roofs. The silly girl thou hast wived would wish to frighten me!"

Lionel shuddered with inward horror while he listened to the forced and broken intonations of her voice, as she thus uttered the lingering wishes of her nature. He turned again from the view, and, for a moment, buried his face in his hands, as if to exclude the world and its wickedness, together, from his sight.

"My grandmother, look not so wildly at us!" continued the gasping Cecil—"you may have yet hours, nay, days, before you." She paused an instant to follow the unsettled and hopeless gaze of an eye that gleamed despairingly on the objects of the room, and then, with a meek dependence on her own purity, dropping her face between her hands, she cried aloud in her agony—

"My mother's mother! would that I could die for thee!"

"Die!" echoed the same dissonant voice as before, from a throat that already began to rattle with the hastened approaches of death—"who would die amid the festivities of a bridal! Away—leave me. To thy closet, and thy knees, if thou wilt—but leave me."

She watched with bitter resentment, the retiring form of Cecil, who obeyed with the charitable and pious intention of complying literally with her grandmother's order, before she added—

"The girl is not equal to the task I had set her! All of my race have been weak, but I—my daughter—my husband's niece——"

"What of that niece?" said the startling voice of Ralph, interrupting the diseased wanderings of her mind—"that wife of thy nephew—the mother of this youth? Speak, woman, while time and reason are granted thee."

Lionel now advanced to her bed-side, under an impulse that he could no longer subdue, and addressed her solemnly—

"If thou knowest aught of the dreadful calamity that has befallen my family," he said, "or in any manner hast been accessory to its cause, disburden thy soul, and die in peace. Sister of my grandfather, nay, more,

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mother of my wife! I conjure thee, speak —what of my injured mother?"

"Sister of thy grandfather—mother of thy wife," repeated Mrs. Lechmere, slowly, and in a manner that sufficiently indicated the unsettled state of her thoughts—"Yes, both are true!"

"Speak to me then, of my mother, if you acknowledge the ties of blood—tell me of her dark fate!"

"She is in her grave—dead—rotten—yes —yes—her boasted beauty has been fed upon by beastly worms! What more would ye have, mad boy? Would'st wish to see her bones in their winding-sheet?"

"The truth!" cried Ralph; "declare the truth, and thy own wicked agency in the deed!"

"Who speaks?" repeated Mrs. Lechmere, dropping her voice from its notes of high excitement again, to the tremulous cadency of debility and age, and looking about her at the same time, as if a sudden remembrance had crossed her brain; "surely I heard sounds I should know!"

"Here; look on me—fix thy wandering eye, if it yet has power to see, on me," cried Ralph, aloud, as though he would command her attention at every hazard—"'tis I that speak to thee, Priscilla Lechmere."

"What wouldst thou have? My daughter? She is in her grave! Her child? She is wedded to another.—Thou art too late! Thou art too late! Would to God thou hadst asked her of me in season——"

"The truth—the truth—the truth!" continued the old man, in a voice that rung through the apartment in wild and startling echoes—"the holy and undefiled truth! Give us that, and naught else."

This singular and solemn appeal awakened the latest energies of the despairing woman, whose inmost soul appeared to recoil before his cries. She made an effort to raise herself once more, and exclaimed—

"Who says that I am dying? I am but seventy! and 'tis only yesterday I was a child —a pure, an uncontaminated child! He lies—he lies! I have no mortification—I am strong, and have years to live and repent in."

In the pauses of her utterance, the voice of the old man was still heard shouting—

"The truth—the truth—the holy, undefiled truth!"

"Let me rise and look upon the sun," continued the dying woman. "Where are ye all? Cecil, Lionel—my children, do ye desert me now? Why do ye darken the room? Give me light—more light!—more light! for the sake of all in heaven and earth, abandon me not to this black and terrific darkness!"

Her aspect had become so hideously despairing, that the voice of even Ralph was stilled and she continued uninterruptedly to shriek out the ravings of her soul.

"Why talk to such as I of death!—My time has been too short!—give me days—give me hours—give me moments! Cecil, Agnes—Abigail; where are ye?—help me, or I fall!"

She raised herself, by a desperate effort, from the pillows, and clutched wildly at the empty air. Meeting the extended hand of Lionel, she caught it with a dying grasp, gave a ghastly smile, under the false security it imparted, and falling backward again, her mortal part settled, with a universal shudder, into a state of eternal rest.

As the horrid exclamations of the deceased ended, so deep a stillness succeeded in the apartment, that the passing gusts of the gale were heard sighing among the roofs of the town, and might easily be mistaken, at such a moment, for the moanings of unembodied spirits over so accursed an end.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"I wonder, sir, since wives are monstrous to you,
And that you fly them, as you swear them lordship,
Yet you desire to marry."
—*All's Well That Ends Well.*

CECIL had left the room of her grandmother, with the consciousness of sustaining a load of anguish, to which her young experience had hitherto left her a stranger. On her knees, and in the privacy of her closet, she poured out the aspirations of her pure spirit, in fervent petitions to that power, which she, who most needed its support, had so long braved by the mockery of respect, and the seemliness of devotion. With her soul

elevated by its recent communion with her God, and her feelings soothed even to calmness by the sacred glow that was shed around them, the youthful bride at length prepared to resume her post at the bedside of her aged relative.

In passing from her own room to that of Mrs. Lechmere, she heard the busy voice of Agnes below, together with the sounds of the preparations that were making to grace her own hasty bridal, and for a moment she paused to assure herself that all which had so recently passed was more than the workings of a disturbed fancy. She gazed at the unusual, though modest ornaments of her attire; shuddered as she remembered the awful omen of the shadow; and then came to the dreadful reality with an overwhelming conviction of its truth. After laying her hand on the door, she paused, with secret terror, to catch the sounds that might issue from the chamber of the sick. After listening a moment, the bustle below was hushed, and she, too, heard the whistling of the wind, as its echoes died away among the chimneys and angles of the building. Encouraged by the death-like stillness of those within her grandmother's room, Cecil now opened the door, under the pleasing impression that she should find the resignation of a Christian, where she had so lately witnessed the incipient ravings of despair. Her entrance was timid; for she dreaded to meet the hollow, but glaring eye of the nameless being who had borne the message of the physician, and of whose mien and language she retained a confused but fearful recollection. Her hesitation and her fears were, however, alike vain; for the room was silent and tenantless. Casting one wondering look around, in quest of the form most dear to her, Cecil advanced with a light step to the bed, and raising the coverlet, discovered the fatal truth at a glance.

The lineaments of Mrs. Lechmere had already stiffened, and assumed that cadaverous and ghastly expression, which marks the touch of death. The parting soul had left the impression of its agony on her features, exhibiting the wreck of those passions which caused her, even in death, to look backward on that world she was leaving forever, instead of forward to the unknown existence, toward which she was hurried. Perhaps the suddenness and the very weight of the shock, sustained the cheerless bride in that moment of trial. She neither spoke nor moved for more than a minute; but remained with her eyes riveted on the desolation of that countenance she had revered from her infancy, with a species of holy awe that was not entirely free from horror. Then came the recollection of the portentous omens of her wedding, and with it a dread that the heaviest of her misfortunes were yet in reserve. She dropped the covering on the pallid features of the dead, and quitted the apartment with a hurried step. The room of Lionel was on the same floor with that which she had just left, and before she had time for reflection, her hand was on its lock. Her brain was bewildered with the rush of circumstances. For a single instant she paused with maiden bashfulness, even recoiling in sensitive shame from the act she was about to commit, when all her fears, mingled with glimmerings of the truth, flashed again across her mind, and she burst into the room, uttering the name of him she sought, aloud.

The brands of a fallen fire had been carefully raked together, and were burning with a feeble and wavering flame. The room seemed filled with a cold air, which, as she encountered it, chilled the delicate person of of Cecil; and flickering shadows were playing on the walls, with the uncertain movements imparted by the unsteady light. But, like the apartment of the dead, the room was still empty. Perceiving that the door of the little dressing-room was open, she rushed to its threshold, and the mystery of the cold air, and the wavering fire, was explained, when she felt the gusts of wind rush by her from the open door at the foot of the narrow stairs. If Cecil had ever been required to explain the feelings which induced her to descend, or the manner in which it was effected, she would have been unable to comply; for, quick as thought, she stood on the threshold of the outer door, nearly unconscious of her situation.

The moon was still wading among the driving clouds, shedding just light enough to make the spectator sensible of the stillness of the camp and town. The easterly wind yet howled along the streets, occasionally lifting whirlwinds of snow, and wrapping whole

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squares in its dim wreaths. But neither man nor beast was visible amid the dreariness.

The bewildered bride shrunk from the dismal view, with a keen perception of its wild consonance with the death of her grandmother. In another moment she was again in the room above, each part of which was examined with maddening anxiety for the person of her husband. But her powers, excited and unnatural as they had become, could support her no longer. She was forced to yield to the impression that Lionel had deserted her in the most trying moment, and it was not strange that she coupled the sinister omens of the night with his mysterious absence. The heart-stricken girl clasped her hands in anguish, and shrieking the name of her cousin, sunk on the floor in total insensibility.

Agnes was busily and happily employed with her domestics, in preparing such a display of the wealth of the Lechmeres as should not disgrace her cousin in the eyes of her more wealthy lord and master. The piercing cry, however, notwithstanding the bustle of hurrying servants, and the clatter of knives and plates, penetrated to the supper-room, stilling each movement and blanching every cheek.

"'Tis my name!" said Agnes; "who is it calls?"

"If it was *possible*," returned Meriton, with a suitable emphasis, "that Master Lionel's bride *could* scream so, I should say it was my lady's voice!"

"'Tis Cecil—'tis Cecil!" cried Agnes, darting from the room; "O, I feared these hasty nuptials!"

There was a general rush of the menials into the chambers, when the fatal truth became immediately known to the whole family. The lifeless clay of Mrs. Lechmere was discovered in its ghastly deformity, and, to all but Agnes, it afforded a sufficient solution of the situation of the bride.

More than an hour passed before the utmost care of her attendants succeeded in restoring Cecil to a state in which questions might avail anything. Then her cousin took advantage of the temporary absence of her women, to mention the name of her husband. Cecil heard her with sudden joy; but looking about the room wildly, as if seeking him with her eyes, she pressed her hands upon her heart, and fell backward in that state of insensibility, from which she had just been roused. No part of this expressive evidence of her grief was lost on the other, who left the room the instant her care had succeeded in bringing the sufferer once more to her recollection.

Agnes Danforth had never regarded her aunt with that confiding veneration and love which purified the affections of the granddaughter of the deceased. She had always possessed her more immediate relatives, from whom she derived her feelings and opinions, nor was she wanting in sufficient discernment to distinguish the cold and selfish traits that had so particularly marked the character of Mrs. Lechmere. She had, therefore, consented to mortify her own spirit, and submit to the privations and dangers of the siege, entirely from a disinterested attachment to her cousin, who, without her presence, would have found her solitude and situation irksome.

In consequence of this disposition of her mind, Agnes was more shocked than distressed by the unexpected death that had occurred. Perhaps, if her anxiety had been less roused in behalf of Cecil, she might have retired to weep over the departure of one she had known so long, and of one, also, that, in the sincerity of her heart, she believed so little prepared for the mighty change. As it was, however, she took her way calmly to the parlor, where she summoned Meriton to her presence.

When the valet made his entrance, she assumed the appearance of a composure that was far from her feelings, and desired him to seek his master, with a request that he would give Miss Danforth a short interview, without delay. During the time Meriton was absent on this errand, Agnes endeavored to collect her thoughts for any emergency.

Minute passed after minute, however, and the valet did not return. She arose, and stepping lightly to the door, listened, and thought she heard his footsteps moving about in the more distant parts of the building, with a quickness that proved he conducted the search in good faith. At length she heard them nigher, and it was soon certain he was on his return. Agnes seated herself,

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as before, and with an air that seemed as if she expected to receive the master instead of the man. Meriton, however, returned alone.

"Major Lincoln," she said, "you desired him to meet me here?"

The whole countenance of Meriton expressed his amazement, as he answered—

"Lord! Miss Agnes, Master Lionel has gone out! gone out on *such* a night! and what is more remarkable, he has gone out without his mourning; though the dead of his own blood and connections lies unburied in the house!"

Agnes preserved her composure, and gladly led the valet on in the path his thoughts had taken, in order to come at the truth, without betraying her own apprehensions.

"How know you, Mr. Meriton, that your master has been so far forgetful of appearances?"

"As certain, ma'am, as I know that he wore his parade uniform this evening when he left the house the first time; though little did I dream his honor was going to get married! If he hasn't gone out in the same dress, where is it?—Besides, ma'am, his last mourning is under lock, and here is the key in my pocket."

"'Tis singular he should choose such an hour, as well as the time of his marriage, to absent himself!"

Meriton had long learned to identify all his interest with those of his master, and he colored highly under the oblique imputation that he thought was no less cast on Lionel's gallantry than on his sense of propriety in general.

"Why, Miss Agnes, you will please remember, ma'am," he answered, "as this wedding hasn't been at all like an English wedding—nor can I say that it is altogether usual to die in England as suddenly as Ma'am Lechmere has been pleased——"

"Perhaps," interrupted Agnes, "some accident may have happened to him. Surely no man of common humanity would willingly be away at such a moment!"

The feelings of Meriton now took another direction, and he unhesitatingly adopted the worst apprehensions of the young lady.

Agnes leaned her forehead on her hand, for a minute, in deep reflection, before she spoke again; then, raising her eyes to the valet, she said—

"Mr. Meriton, know you where Captain Polwarth sleeps?"

"Certainly, ma'am!—He's a gentleman as always sleeps in his own bed, unless the king's service calls him elsewhere. A considerate gentleman is Captain Polwarth, ma'am, in respect of himself!"

Miss Danforth bit her lip, and her playful eye lighted for an instant, with a ray that banished its look of sadness; but in another moment her features became demure, if not melancholy, and she continued—

"I believe, then—'tis awkward and distressing, too, but nothing better can be done."

"Did you please to give me any orders, Miss Agnes?"

"Yes, Meriton; you will go to the lodgings of Captain Polwarth, and tell him Mrs. Lincoln desires his immediate presence here, in Tremont Street."

"My lady!" repeated the amazed valet—"why, Miss Agnes, the women says as my lady is unconscionable, and does not know what is doing, or who speaks to her! A mournful wedding, ma'am, for the heir of our house!"

"Then tell him," said Agnes, as she arose to leave the room, "that Miss Danforth would be glad to see him."

Meriton waited no longer than was necessary to mutter his approbation of this alteration in the message, when he left the house, with a pace that was a good deal quickened by his growing fears on the subject of his master's safety. Notwithstanding his apprehensions, the valet was by no means insensible to the severity of the climate he was in, nor to the peculiar qualities of that night, in which he was so unexpectedly thrust abroad to encounter its fury. He soon succeeded, however, in making his way to the quarters of Polwarth, in the midst of the driving snow, and in defiance of the cold that chilled his very bones. Happily for the patience of the worthy valet, Shearflint, the semi-military attendant of the captain, was yet up, having just discharged his nightly duties about the person of his master, who had not deemed it prudent to seek his pillow without proving the consolations of the trencher. The door was opened at the first tap of Meri-

ton, and when the other had expressed his surprise, by the usual exclamations, the two attendants adjourned to the sitting-room, where the embers of a good wood fire were yet shedding a grateful heat in the apartment.

"What a shocking country is this America for cold, Mr. Shearflint!" said Meriton, kicking the brands together with his boot, and rubbing his hands over the coals—"I doesn't think as our English cold is at all like it. It's a stronger and a better cold is ours, but it doesn't cut one like dull razors, as this here of America."

Shearflint, who fancied himself particularly liberal, and ever made it a point to show his magnanimity to his enemies, never speaking of the colonists without a sort of protecting air, that he intended should reflect largely on his own candor, briskly replied—

"This is a new country, Mr. Meriton, and one shouldn't be over-nice. When one goes abroad, one must learn to put up with difficulties; especially in the colonies, where it can't be expected all things should be as comfortable as we has 'em at 'ome."

"Well, now, I call myself a little particular in respect of weather," returned Meriton, "as and going. But give me England for climate, if for nothing else. The water comes down in that blessed country in good, honest drops, and not in little frozen bits, which prick one's face like so many fine needles!"

"You do look, Mr. Meriton, a little as if you had been shaking your master's powder-puff about your own ears. But I was just finishing the heel-tap of the captain's hot toddy; perhaps if you was to taste it, 'twould help to thaw out the idears."

"God bless me! Shearflint," said Meriton, relinquishing his grasp of the tankard, to take breath after a most vigorous draught—"do you always stuff his night-cap so thick?"

"No—no—the captain can tell a mixture by his nose, and it doesn't do to make partial alterations in his glass," returned Shearflint, giving the tankard a circular motion to stir its contents, while he spoke, and swallowing the trifle that remained, apparently at a gulp; "then as I thinks it a pity that anything should be wasted in these distressing time, I generally drinks what's left, after adding sum'at to the water, just to mellow it down. But what brings you abroad such a foul night, Mr. Meriton?"

"Sure enough, my idears wanted thawing, as you instigated, Shearflint! Here have I been sent on a message of life and death, and I was forgetting my errand like a raw boy just hired from the country!"

"Something is stirring, then!" said the other, offering a chair, which his companion received without any words, while Polwarth's man took another, with equal composure. "I thought as much, from the captain's hungry appearance, when he came home to-night, after dressing himself with so much care, to take his supper in Tremont Street."

"Something has been stirring indeed! For one thing, it is certain, Master Lionel was married to-night, in the King's Chapel!"

"Married!" echoed the other—"well, thank heaven, no such unavoidables has befallen us, though we have been amputrated. I couldn't live with a married gentleman, nohow, Mr. Meriton. A master in breeches is enough for me, without one in petticoats to set him on!"

"That depends altogether on people's conditions, Shearflint," returned Meriton, with a sort of condescending air of condolence, as though he pitied the other's poverty.—"It would be great folly for a captain of foot, that is nothing *but* a captain of foot, to unite in Hymen. But, as we say at Ravenscliffe and Soho, Cupid will listen to the sighs of the heir of a Devonshire baronet, with fifteen thousand a year."

"I never heard any one say it was more than ten," interrupted the other, with a strong taint of ill-humor in his manner.

"Not more than ten! I can count ten myself, and I am sure there must be some that I doesn't know of."

"Well, if it be twenty," cried Shearflint, rising and kicking the brands among the ashes, in a manner to destroy all the cheerfulness of the little fire that remained, "it won't help you to do your errand. You should remember that us servants of poor captains have nobody to help us with our work, and want our natural rest. What's your pleasure, Mr. Meriton!"

"To see your master, Mister Shearflint."

"That's impossibility! he's under five

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blankets, and I wouldn't lift the thinnest of them for a month's wages."

"Then I shall do it for you, because speak to him I must. Is he in this room?"

"Ay, you'll find him somewhere there, among the bed-clothes," returned Shearflint, throwing open the door of an adjoining apartment, secretly hoping Meriton would get his head broken for his trouble, as he removed himself out of harm's way, by returning to the fire-place.

Meriton was compelled to give the captain several rough shakes before he succeeded in rousing him, in the least, from his deep slumbers. Then, indeed, he overheard the sleeper muttering—

"A damn'd foolish business, that—had we made proper use of limbs, we might have kept them. You take this man to be your husband—better or worse—richer or poorer—ha! who are you rolling, dog? have you no regard to digestion, to shake a man in this manner, just after eating!"

"It's I, sir—Meriton."

"And what the devil do you mean by this liberty, Mr. I, or Meriton, or whatever you call yourself?"

"I am sent for you in a great hurry, sir—awful things have happened to-night up in Tremont——"

"Happened!" repeated Polwarth, who by this time was thoroughly awake—"I know, fellow, that your master is married—I gave the bride away myself. I suppose nothing else, that is particularly extraordinary, has happened."

"Oh! Lord, yes, sir—my lady is in fainting fits, and Master Lionel has gone, God knows whither, and Madam Lechmere is dead!"

Meriton had not concluded, before Polwarth sprang from his bed in the best manner he was able, and began to dress himself, by a sort of instinct, though without any definite object. By the unfortunate arrangement of Meriton's intelligence, he supposed the death of Mrs. Lechmere to be in consequence of some strange and mysterious separation of the bride from her husband, and his busy thoughts did not fail to recall the singular interruption of the nuptials, so often mentioned.

"And Miss Danforth!" he asked—"how does she bear it?"

"Like a woman, as she is, and a true lady. It is no small thing as puts Miss Agnes beside herself, sir!"

"No, that it is not! she is much more apt to drive others mad."

"'Twas she, sir, as sent me to desire you to come up to Tremont Street, without any delay."

"The devil it was! Hand me that boot, my good fellow. One boot, thank God, is sooner put on than two! The vest and stock next. You, Shearflint! where have you got to, sirrah! Bring me my leg, this instant."

As soon as his own man heard this order, he made his appearance; and as he was much more conversant with the mystery of his master's toilet than Meriton, the captain was soon equipped for his sudden expedition.

During the time he was dressing, he continued to put hasty questions to Meriton, concerning the cause of the disturbance in Tremont Street, the answers to which only served to throw him more upon the ocean of uncertainty than ever. The instant he was clad, he wrapped himself in his cloak, and, taking the arm of the valet, he essayed to find his way through the tempest to the spot where he was told Agnes Danforth awaited his appearance, with a chivalry that, in another age, and under different circumstances, would have made him a hero.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Proud lineage! now how little thou appearest!"
—BLAIR.

NOTWITHSTANDING the unusual alacrity with which Polwarth obeyed the unexpected summons of the capricious being whose favor he had so long courted, with so little apparent success, he lingered in his steps as he approached near enough to the house in Tremont Street, to witness the glancing lights which flitted before the windows. On the threshold he stopped, and listened to the opening and shutting of doors, and all those marked, and yet stifled sounds, which are wont to succeed a visit of the grim monarch to the dwellings of the sick. His rap was unanswered, and he was compelled to order Meriton to show him into the little parlor where he had so often been a guest, under

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more propitious circumstances. Here he found Agnes, awaiting his appearance with a gravity, if not sadness of demeanor, that instantly put to flight certain complimentary effusions, with which the captain had determined to open the interview, in order to follow up, in the true temper of a soldier, the small advantage he conceived he had obtained in the good opinion of his mistress. Altering the exulting expression of his features with his first glance at the countenance of Miss Danforth, Polwarth paid his compliments in a manner better suited to the state of the family, and desired to know, if in any manner he could contribute to their comfort or relief.

"Death has been among us, Captain Polwarth," said Agnes, "and his visit has, indeed, been sudden and unexpected. To add to our embarrassment, Major Lincoln is missing!"

As she concluded, Agnes fastened her eyes on the face of the other, as though she would require an explanation of the unaccountable absence of the bridegroom.

"Lionel Lincoln is not a man to fly because death approaches," returned the captain, musing; "and less should I suspect him of deserting, in her distress, one like the lovely creature he has married. Perhaps he has gone in quest of medical aid?"

"It cannot be. I have gathered from the broken sentences of Cecil, that he, and some third person to me unknown, were last with my aunt, and must have been present at her death; for the face was covered. I found the bride in the room which Lionel has lately occupied—the doors open, and with indications that he and his unknown companion had left the house by the private stairs, which communicate with the western door. As my cousin speaks but little, all other clew to the movements of her husband is lost, unless this ornament, which I found glittering among the embers of the fire, may serve for such a purpose. It is, I believe, a soldier's gorget."

"It is, indeed; and it would seem the wearer has been in some jeopardy, by this bullet-hole through its centre. By heavens! —'tis that of M'Fuse!—Here is the 18th engraved; and I know these little marks which the poor fellow was accustomed to make on it at every battle; for he never failed to wear the bawble. The last was the saddest record of them all?"

"In what manner, then, could it be conveyed into the apartment of Major Lincoln? Is it possible that——"

"In what manner, truly!" interrupted Polwarth, rising in his agitation, and beginning to pace the room, in the best manner his multilated condition would allow—"Poor Dennis! that I should find such a relic of thy end at last! You did not know Dennis, I believe. He was a man, fair Agnes, every way adapted by nature for a soldier. His was the form of Hercules! the heart of a lion, and the digestion of an ostrich! But he could not master this cruel lead! He is dead, poor fellow, he is dead!"

"Still you find no clew in the gorget by which to trace the living?" demanded Agnes.

"Ha!" exclaimed Polwarth, starting—"I think I begin to see into the mystery! The fellow who could slay the man with whom he had eaten and drunk, might easily rob the dead! You found the gorget near the fire of Major Lincoln's room, say you, fair Agnes?"

"In the embers, as if cast there for concealment, or dropped in some sudden strait."

"I have it—I have it!" returned Polwarth, striking his hands together, and speaking through his teeth—"'twas that dog who murdered him, and justice shall now take its swing—fool or no fool, he shall be hung up like jerked beef, to dry in the winds of heaven!"

"Of whom speak you, Polwarth, with that threatening air?" inquired Agnes, in a soothing voice, of which, like the rest of her sex, she well knew not only the power, but when to exercise it.

"Of a canting, hypocritical miscreant, who is called Job Pray—a fellow with no more conscience than brains, nor any more brains than honesty. An ungainly villain, who will eat of your table to-day, and put the same knife that administered to his hunger to your throat to-morrow! It was such a dog that butchered the glory of Erin!"

"It must have been in open battle, then," said Agnes, "for though wanting in reason, Job has been reared in the knowledge of good and evil. The child must be strongly

stamped with the wrath of God, indeed, for whom some effort is not made by a Boston mother, to recover his part in the great atonement!"

"He, then, is an exception; for surely no Christian will join you in the great natural pursuit of eating at one moment, and turn his fangs on a comrade at the next."

"But what has all this to do with the absent bridegroom?"

"It proves that Job Pray has been in his room since the fire was replenished, or some other than you would have found the gorget."

"It proves a singular association, truly, between Major Lincoln and the simpleton," said Agnes, musing; "but still it throws no light on his disappearance. 'Twas an old man that my cousin mentioned in her unconnected sentences!"

"My life on it, fair Agnes, that if Major Lincoln has left the house mysteriously to-night, it is under the guidance of that wretch! —I have known them together in council more than once, before this."

"Then, if he be weak enough to forsake such a woman as my cousin, at the instigation of a fool, he is unworthy of another thought!"

Agnes colored as she spoke, and turned the conversation with a manner that denoted how deeply she resented the slight to Cecil.

The peculiar situation of the town, and the absence of all her own male relatives, soon induced Miss Danforth to listen to the reiterated offers of service from the captain, and finally to accept them. Their conference was long and confidential; nor did Polwarth retire until his footsteps were assisted by the dull light of the approaching day. When he left the house to return to his own quarters, no tidings had been heard of Lionel, whose intentional absence was now so certain that the captain proceeded to give his orders for the funeral of the deceased, without any further delay. He had canvassed with Agnes the propriety of every arrangement so fully, that he was at no loss how to conduct himself. It had been determined between them that the state of the siege, as well as certain indications of movements which were already making in the garrison, rendered it inexpedient to delay the obsequies a moment longer than was required by the unavoidable preparations.

Accordingly, the Lechmere vault, in the church-yard of the "King's Chapel," was directed to be opened, and the vain trappings, in which the dead are usually enshrouded, were provided. The same clergyman, who had so lately pronounced the nuptial benediction over the child, was now required to perform the last melancholy offices of the Church over the parent, and the invitations to the few friends of the family who remained in the place were duly issued in suitable form.

By the time the sun had fallen near the amphitheatre of hills, along whose crests were here and there to be seen the works of the indefatigable men who held the place in leaguer, the brief preparations for the interment of the deceased were completed. The prophetical words of Ralph were now fulfilled, and, according to the custom of the province, the doors of one of its proudest dwellings were thrown open for all those who chose to enter and depart at will. The funeral train, though respectable, was far from extending to that display of solemn countenances which Boston, in its peace and pride, would not have failed to exhibit on any similar occasion. A few of the oldest and most respected of the inhabitants, who were distantly connected by blood or alliances with the deceased, attended; but there had been nothing in the cold and selfish character of Mrs. Lechmere to gather the poor and dependent in sorrowing groups around her funeral rites. The passage of the body, from its late dwelling to the tomb, was quiet, decent, and impressive, but entirely without any demonstrations of grief. Cecil had buried herself and her sorrows, together, in the privacy of her own room, and none of the more distant relatives who had collected, male or female, appeared to find it at all difficult to restrain their feelings within the bounds of the most rigid decorum.

Dr. Liturgy received the body, as usual, on the threshold of the sacred edifice, and the same solemn and affecting language was uttered over the dead, as if she had departed soothed by the most cheerful visions of an assured faith. As the service proceeded, the citizens clustered about the coffin, in deep attention, in admiration of the unwonted tremor and solemnity that had crept into the voice of the priest.

Among this little collection of inhabitants of the colony, were interspersed a few men in

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the military dress, who, having known the family of the deceased in more settled times, had not forgotten to pay the last tribute to the memory of one of its dead.

When the short service was ended, the body was raised on the shoulders of the attendants, and borne into the yard to its place of final rest. At such a funeral, where few mourned, and none wept, no unnecessary delay would be made in disposing of the melancholy relics of mortality. In a very few moments, the narrow tenement, which contained the festering remains of one who had so lately harbored such floods of human passion, was lowered from the light of day, and the body was left to moulder by the side of those which had gone before to the darkness of the tomb. Perhaps, of all who witnessed the descent of the coffin, Polwarth alone, through that chain of sympathies which bound him to the caprice of Agnes, felt any emotion at all in consonance with the solemn scene. The obsequies of the dead were, like the living character of the woman, cold, formal, and artificial. The sexton and his assistants had hardly commenced replacing the stone which covered the entrance of the vault, when a knot of elderly men set the example of desertion, by moving away in a body from the spot. As they picked their footsteps among the graves, and over the frozen ground of the churchyard, they discoursed idly together, of the fortunes and age of the woman of whom they had now taken their leave forever. The curse of selfishness appeared even to have fallen on the warning, which so sudden an end should have given to those who forgot they tottered on the brink of the grave. They spoke of the deceased as of one who had failed to awaken the charities of our nature, and though several ventured their conjectures as to the manner in which she had disposed of her worldly possessions, not one remembered to lament that she had continued no longer to enjoy them! From this theme they soon wandered to themselves, and the whole party quitted the church-yard, joking each other on the inroads of time, each man attempting to ape the elastic tread of youth, in order not only to conceal from his companions the ravages of age, but with a vain desire to extend the artifice so far, if possible, as to deceive himself.

When the seniors of the party withdrew, the remainder of the spectators did not hesitate to follow; and in a few minutes Polwarth found himself standing before the vault, with only two others of all those who had attended the body. The captain, who had been at no little expense of time and trouble to maintain the decencies which became a near friend of the family of the deceased, stood a minute longer, to permit these lingering followers to retire also, before he turned his own back on the place of the dead. But perceiving they both maintained their posts, in silent attention, he raised his eyes, more curiously, to examine who these loiterers might be.

The one nearest to himself was a man whose dress and air bespoke him to be of no very exalted rank in life, while the other was a woman of even an inferior condition, if an opinion might be formed from the squalid misery that was exhibited in her attire. A little fatigued with the arduous labors of the day, and of the duties of the unusual office he had assumed, the worthy captain touched his hat with studied decorum, and said—

"I thank you, good people, for this mark of respect to the memory of my deceased friend; but as we have performed all that can now be done in her behalf, we will retire."

Apparently encouraged by the easy and courteous manner of Polwarth, the man approached still nigher, and, after bowing with much respect, ventured to say—

"They tell me 'tis the funeral of Madam Lechmere that I have witnessed?"

"They tell you true, sir," returned the captain, beginning slowly to pick his way toward the gate; "of Mrs. Priscilla, the relict of Mr. John Lechmere—a lady of a creditable descent, and I think it will not be denied that she has had honorable interment."

"If it be the lady I suppose," continued the stranger, "she is of an honorable descent indeed. Her maiden name was Lincoln, and she is aunt to the great Devonshire baronet of that family."

"How? know you the Lincolns?" exclaimed Polwarth, stopping short, and turning to examine the other with a stricter eye. Perceiving, however, that the stranger was a

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man of harsh and peculiarly forbidding features, in the vulgar dress already mentioned, he muttered—"you may have heard of them, friend, but I should doubt whether your intimacy could amount to such wholesome familiarities as eating and drinking."

"Stronger intimacies than that, sir, are sometimes brought about between men who were born to very different fortunes," returned the stranger, with a peculiarly sarcastic and ambiguous smile, which meant more than met the eye—"but all who know the Lincolns, sir, will allow their claims to distinction. If this lady was one of them, she had reason to be proud of her blood."

"Ay, you are not tainted, I see, with these revolutionary notions, my friend," returned Polwarth; "she was also connected with a very good sort of a family in this colony, called the Danforths—you know the Danforths?"

"Not at all, sir, I——"

"Not know the Danforths!" exclaimed Polwarth, once more stopping to bestow a freer scrutiny on his companion. After a short pause, however, he nodded his head, in approbation of his own conclusions, and added—"No, no—I am wrong—I see you could not have known much of the Danforths!"

The stranger appeared quite willing to overlook the cavalier treatment he received, for he continued to attend the difficult footsteps of the maimed soldier, with the same respectful deference as before.

"I have no knowledge of the Danforths, it is true," he answered; "but I may boast of some intimacy with the family of Lincoln."

"Would to God, then," cried Polwarth, in a sort of soliloquy, which escaped him in the fulness of his heart, "you could tell us what has become of its heir!"

The stranger stopped short in his turn, and exclaimed—

"Is he not serving with the army of the king, againt this rebellion—Is he not here?"

"He is here, or he is there, or he is anywhere; I tell you he is lost."

"He is lost!" echoed the other.

"Lost!" repeated an humble female voice, at the very elbow of the captain.

This singular repetition of his own language aroused Polwarth from the abstraction into which he had suffered himself to fall. In his course from the vault to the churchyard gate, he had unconsciously approached the woman before mentioned, and when he turned at the sound of her voice, his eyes fell upon her anxious countenance. The very first glance was enough to tell the observant captain that, in the midst of her poverty and rags, he saw the broken remains of great female beauty. Her dark and intelligent eyes, set as they were in a sallow and sunken countenance, still retained much of the brightness, if not of the softness and peace of youth. The contour of her face was also striking, though she might be said to resemble one whose loveliness had long since departed with her innocence. But the gallantry of Polwarth was proof even against the unequivocal signs of misery, if not of guilt, which were so easily to be traced in her appearance; and he too much respected even the remains of female charms which were yet visible amid such a mass of unseemliness, to regard them with an unfriendly eye. Apparently encouraged by the kind look of the captain, the woman ventured to add—

"Did I hear aright, sir?—said you that Major Lincoln was lost?"

"I am afraid, good woman,"—returned the captain, leaning on the iron-shod stick with which he was wont to protect his footsteps along the icy streets of Boston—"that this siege has, in your case, proved unusually severe. If I am not mistaken in a matter in which I profess to know much, nature is not supported as nature should be. You would ask for food, and God forbid that I should deny a fellow-creature a morsel of that which constitutes both the seed and the fruits of life. Here is money."

The muscles of the attenuated countenance of the woman worked with a sudden convulsive motion, and, for a moment, she glanced her eyes wistfully toward his silver, but a slight flush passing quickly over her pallid features, she answered—

"Whatever may be my wants and my suffering, I thank my God that he has not levelled me with the beggar of the streets. Before that evil day shall come, may I find a place among these frozen hillocks where we stand. But I beg pardon, sir; I thought I heard you speak of Major Lincoln."

"I did—and what of him? I said he was lost; and it is true, if that be lost which cannot be found."

"And did Madam Lechmere take her leave before he was missing?" asked the woman advancing a step nearer to Polwarth, in her intense anxiety to be answered.

"Do you think, good woman, that a gentleman of Major Lincoln's notion of things, would disappear after the decease of his relative, and leave a comparative stranger to fill the office of principal mourner."

"The Lord forgive us all our sins and wickedness!" muttered the woman, drawing the shreds of her tattered cloak about her shivering form, and hastening silently away into the depths of the grave-yard. Polwarth regarded her unceremonious departure for a moment, in surprise, and then, turning to to his remaining companion, he remarked—

"That woman is unsettled in her reason, for the want of wholesome nutriment. It is just as impossible to retain the powers of the mind, and neglect the stomach, as it is to expect a truant boy will make a learned man." By this time the worthy captain had forgotten whom it was he addressed, and he continued, in his usual philosophic strain, "Children are sent to school to learn all useful inventions but that of eating; for to eat—that is, to eat with judgment—is as much of an invention as any other discovery. Every mouthful a man swallows has to undergo four important operations, each of which may be called a crisis in the human constitution."

"Suffer me to help you over this grave," said the other, officiously offering his assistance.

"I thank you, sir, I thank you—'tis a sad commentary on my words!" returned the captain with a melancholy smile. "The time has been when I served in the light corps, but your men in unequal quantities are good for little else but garrisons!—As I was saying, there is first, the selection; second, mastication; third, deglutition; and lastly, the digestion."

"Quite true, sir," said the stranger, a little abruptly; "thin diet and light meals are best for the brain."

"Thin diet and light meals, sir, are good for nothing but to rear dwarfs and idiots!" returned the captain with some heat. "I repeat to you, sir——"

He was interrupted by the stranger, who suddenly smothered a dissertation on the connection between the material and immaterial, by asking—

"If the heir of such a family be lost, is there none to see that he is found again?"

Polwarth, finding himself thus checked in the very opening of his theme, stopped again, and stared the other full in the face for a moment, without making any reply. His kind feeling, however, got the better of his displeasure, and yielding to the interest he felt in the fate of Lionel, he answered—

"I would go all lengths, and incur every hazard to do him service!"

"Then, sir, accident has brought those together who are willing to engage in the same undertaking! I, too, will do my utmost to discover him. I have heard he has friends in this province. Has he no connection to whom we may apply for intelligence?"

"None nearer than a wife."

"A wife!" repeated the other in surprise—"is he then married?"

A long pause ensued, during which the stranger mused deeply, and Polwarth bestowed a still more searching scrutiny than ever on his companion. It would appear that the result was not satisfactory to the captain; for, shaking his head, in no very equivocal manner, he resumed the task of picking his way among the graves, toward the gate, with renewed diligence. He was in the act of seating himself in the pung, when the stranger again stood at his elbow, and said—

"If I knew to find his wife, I would offer my services to the lady."

Polwarth pointed to the building of which Cecil was now the mistress, and answered somewhat superciliously as he drove away—

"She is there, my good friend, but your application will be useless!"

The stranger received the direction in an understanding manner, and smiled with satisfied confidence, while he took the opposite route from that by which the busy equipage of the captain had already disappeared.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

"Up Fish Street! down Saint Magnus' corner!
Kill and knock down! Throw them into the Thames—
What noise is this I hear? Dare any be so bold to sound
Retreat or parley, when I command them kill?"
—*King Henry IV.*

It was rarely, indeed, that the equal-minded Polwarth undertook an adventure with so fell an intent as was the disposition with which he directed the head of the hunter to be turned toward the Dock square. He had long known the residence of Job Pray, and often, in passing from his lodgings, near the common, into the more fashionable quarter of the town, the good-natured epicure had turned his head to bestow a nod and a smile on the unsophisticated admirer of his skill in the culinary art. But now, as the pung whirled out of Cornhill into the well-known area, his eye fell on the low and gloomy walls of the warehouse, with a far less amicable design.

From the time he was apprised of the disappearance of his friend, the captain had been industriously ruminating on the subject, in a vain wish to discover any probable reason that might induce a bridegroom to adopt so hasty, and, apparently, so unjustifiable a step, as the desertion of his bride, and that, too, under circumstances of such peculiar distress. But the more he reasoned, the more he found himself involved in the labyrinth of perplexity, until he was glad to seize on the slighest clew which offered, to lead him from his obscurity. In has already been seen in what manner he received the intelligence conveyed through the gorget of M'Fuse, and it now remains for us to show with what commendable ingenuity he improved the hint.

It had always been a matter of surprise to Polwarth, that a man like Lionel should tolerate so much of the society of the simpleton, nor had it escaped his observation, that the communications between the two were a little concealed under a shade of mystery. He had overheard the foolish boast of of the lad, the preceding day, relative to the death of M'Fuse; and the battered ornament, in conjunction with the place where it was found, which accorded so well with his grovelling habits, had tended to confirm its truth. The love of Polwarth for the grenadier was second only to his attachment for his earlier friend. The one had avowedly fallen, and he soon began to suspect that the other had been strangely inveigled from his duty by the agency of this ill-gifted changeling. To conceive an opinion, and to be confirmed in its justice, were results generally produced by the same operation of the mind, with this disciple of animal philosophy. While he stood near the tomb of the Lechmeres, in the important character of chief mourner, he had diligently revolved in his mind the brief arguments which he found necessary to this conclusion. The arrangement of his ideas might boast of the terseness of a syllogism. His proposition and inference were something as follows:—Job murdered M'Fuse;—some great evil has occurred to Lionel;—and therefore Job has been its author.

It is true, there was a good deal of intermediate argument to support this deduction, at which the captain cast an extremely cursory glance, but which the reader may easily conceive, if at all gifted in the way of imagination. It would require no undue belief of the connection between very natural effects and their causes, to show that Polwarth was not entirely unreasonable in suspecting the agency of the simpleton, nor in harboring the deep and bitter resentment that so much mischief, even though it were sustained from the hands of a fool, was likely to awaken. Be that as it may, by the time the pung had reached the point already mentioned, its rapid motion, which accelerated the ordinary quiet circulation of his blood, together with the scene through which he had just passed, and the recollections which had been crowding on his mind, conspired to wind up his resolution to a very obstinate pitch of determination. Of all his schemes, embracing, as they did, compulsion, confession, and punishment, Job Pray was, of course, destined to be both the subject and the victim.

The shadows of evening were already thrown upon the town, and the cold had long before driven the few dealers in meats and vegetables, who continued to find daily employment around the ill-furnished

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shambles, to their several homes. In their stead there was only to be seen a meagre and impoverished follower of the camp, stealing along the shadows of the building, with her half-famished child, as they searched among the offals of the market for some neglected morsel, to eke out the scanty meal of the night. But while the common mart presented this appearance of dulness and want, the lower part of the square exhibited a very different aspsct.

The warehouse was surrounded by a body of men in uniform, whose disorderly and rapid movements proclaimed at once, to the experienced eye of the captain, that they were engaged in a scene of lawless violence. Some were rushing furiously into the building, armed with such weapons as the streets first offered to their hands, while others returned, filling the air with their threats and outcries. A constant current of eager soldiers was setting out of the dark passages in the neighborhood toward the place, and every window of the building was crowded with excited witnesses, who clung to the walls, apparently animating those within by their cheers and applause.

When Polwarth bade Shearflint pull the reins, he caught the quick, half-formed sentences that burst from the rioters, and even before he was able, in the duskiness of the evening, to discover the facings of their uniform, his ear detected the well-known dialect of the Royal Irish. The whole truth now broke upon him at once, and throwing his obese person from the sleigh, in the best manner he was able, he hobbled into the throng, with a singular compound of feeling, which owed its birth to the opposing impulses of a thirst for vengeance, and the lingering influence of his natural kindness. Better men than the captain have, however, lost sight of their humanity, under those fierce sympathies that are awakened in moments of tumult and violence. By the time he had forced his person into the large, dark apartment that formed the main building, he had, in a great degree, suffered himself to be worked into a sternness of purpose, which comported very ill with his intelligence and rank. He even listened, with unaccountable pleasure, to the threats and denunciations which filled the building; until he foresaw, from their savage nature, there was great danger that one half of his object, the discovery of Lionel, was likely to be frustrated by their fulfilment. Animated anew by this impression, he threw the rioters from him with prodigious energy, and succeeded in gaining a position where he might become a more efficient actor in the fray.

There was still light enough to discover Job Pray placed in the centre of the warehouse, on his miserable bed, in an attitude between lying and sitting. While his bodily condition seemed to require the former position, his fears had induced him to attempt the latter. The large, red blotches which covered his unmeaning countenance, and his flushed eye-balls, too plainly announced that the unfortunate young man, in addition to having become the object of the wrath of a lawless mob, was a prey to the ravages of that foul disorder which had long before lighted on the town. Around this squalid subject of poverty and disease, a few of the hardiest of the rioters, chiefly the surviving grenadiers of the 18th, had gathered; while the less excited, or more timid among them, practised their means of annoyance at a greater distance from the malign atmosphere of the distemper. The bruised and bloody person of the simpleton manifested how much he had already suffered from the hands of his tormentors, who happily possessed no very fatal weapons, or the scene would have been much earlier terminated. Notwithstanding his great bodily debility, and the pressing dangers that beset him on every side, Job continued to face his assailants, with a sort of stupid endurance of the pains they inflicted.

At the sight of this revolting spectacle, the heart of Polwarth began greatly to relent, and he endeavored to make himself heard, in the clamor of fifty voices. But his presence was unheeded, for his remonstrances were uttered to ignorant men, wildly bent on vengeance.

"Pul the baist from his rags!" cried one; "'tis no a human man, but a devil's imp, in the shape of a fellow cratur!"

"For such as *him* to murder the flower of the British army!" said another—"his smallpox is nothing but a foul invintion of the ould one, to save him from his daisarrevings!"

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"Would any but a divil invent such a disorder at all?" interrupted a third, who, even in his anger, could not forget his humor. "Have a care, b'ys, he may give it to the whole family the naat'ral way, to save the charges of the inoculation!"

"Have done wid ye'r foolery, Terence," returned the first; "would ye trifle about death, and *his* unrevenged? Put a coal into his filth, b'ys, and burren *it* and him in the same bonfire!"

"A coal! a coal! a brand for the divil's burning!" echoed twenty soldiers, eagerly listening, in the madness of their fury, to the barbarous advice.

Polwarth again exerted himself, though unsuccessfully, to be heard; nor was it until a dozen voices proclaimed, in disappointment, that the house contained neither fire nor fuel, that the sudden commotion in the least subsided.

"Out of the way! out of the way wid ye!" roared one of gigantic mould, whose heavy nature had, like an overcharged volcano, been slowly wrought up to the eve of a fearful eruption—"Here is fire to destroy a salamander! Be he divil or be he saint, he has great need of his prayers!"

As he spoke, the fellow levelled a musket, and another instant would have decided the fate of Job, who cowered before the danger with instinctive dread, had not Polwarth beat up the piece with his cane, and interposed his body between them.

"Hold your fire, brave grenadier," he said, warily adopting a middle course between the language of authority and that of counsel. "This is hasty and unsoldier-like. I knew, and loved your late commander well; let us obtain the confessions of the lad before we proceed to punishment—there may be others more guilty than he."

The men regarded the unexpected intruder with such furious aspect as augured ill of their deference for his advice and station. "Blood for blood!" passed from mouth to mouth, in low, sullen mutterings; and the short pause which had succeeded his appearance was already broken by still less equivocal marks of hostility, when, happily for Polwarth, he was recognized, through the twilight, by a veteran of the grenadiers, as one of the former intimates of M'Fuse. The instant the soldier communicated this discovery to his fellows, the growing uproar again subsided, and the captain was relieved from no small bodily terror, by hearing his own name passing among them, coupled with such amicable additions as, "*his* ould fri'nd!"—"an offisher of the light troops!"—"he that the ribbils massacred of a leg!" etc. As soon as this explanation was generally understood, his ears were greeted with a burst from every mouth, of—

"Hurrah! for Captain Pollywarreth! *His* fri'nd! the brave Captain Pollywarreth!"

Pleased with his success, and secretly gratified by the commendations that were now freely lavished on himself, with characteristic liberality, the mediator improved the slight advantage he had obtained, by again addressing them.

"I thank you for your good opinion, my friends," he added, "and must acknowledge it is entirely mutual. I love the Royal Irish, on account of one that I well knew, and greatly esteemed, and who, I fear, was murdered in defiance of all the rules of war."

"Hear ye that, Dennis murdered!"

"Blood for blood!" muttered three or four surly voices at once.

"Let us be deliberate, that we may be just, and just, that our vengeance may be lawful," Polwarth quickly answered, fearful that if the torrent once more broke loose, it would exceed his powers to stay it. "A true soldier always awaits his orders; and what regiment in the army can boast of its discipline, if it be not the 18th? Form yourselves in a circle around your prisoner, and listen, while I extract the truth from him. After that, should he prove guilty, I will consign him to your tenderest mercy."

The rioters, who only saw, in the delay, a more methodical execution of their own violent purpose, received the proposition with another shout, and the name of Polwarth, pronounced in all the varieties of their barbarous idioms, rung loudly through the naked rafters of the building, while they disposed themselves to comply.

The captain, with a wish to gain time to command his thoughts, required that a light should be struck, in order, as he said, to study the workings of the countenance of the accused. As the night had now gathered about

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them in good earnest, the demand was too reasonable for objection, and with the same headlong eagerness that they had manifested a few minutes before, to shed the blood of Job, they turned their attention, with thoughtless versatility, to effect this harmless object. A brand had been brought, for a very different end, when the plan of burning was proposed, and it had been cast aside again with the change of purpose. A few of its sparks were now collected, and some bundles of oakum, which lay in a corner of the warehouse, were fired, and carefully fed in such a manner as to shed a strong light through every cranny of the gloomy edifice.

By the aid of this fitful glare, the captain succeeded once more in marshalling the rioters in such a manner that no covert injury could be offered to Job. The whole affair now assumed, in some measure, the character of a regular investigation. The curiosity of the men without overcame their fears of infection, and they crowded into the place, in earnest attention, until, in a very few moments, no other sound was audible but the difficult and oppressed respiration of their victim. When all the other noises had ceased, and Polwarth perceived by the eager and savage countenances, athwart which the bright glare of the burning hemp was gleaming, that delay might yet be dangerous, he proceeded at once in his inquiries.

"You may see, Job Pray, by the manner in which you are surrounded," he said, "that judgment has at length overtaken you, and that your only hope for mercy lies in your truth. Answer, then, to such questions as I shall put, and keep the fear of God before your eyes."

The captain paused to allow this exhortation to produce its desired effect. But Job, perceiving that his late tormentors were quiet, and to all appearance bent on no immediate mischief, sunk his head languidly upon his blankets, where he lay in silence, watching, with rolling and anxious eyes, the smallest movements of his enemies. Polwarth soon yielded to the impatience of his listeners, and continued—

"You are acquainted with Major Lincoln?"

"Major Lincoln!" grumbled three or four of the grenadiers—"is it of *him* that we want to hear?"

"One moment, my worthy 18ths; I shall come at the whole truth the sooner, by taking this indirect course."

"Hurrah for Captain Pollywarreth!" shouted the rioters—"him that the ribbils massacred of a leg!"

"Thank you—thank you, my considerate friends—answer, fellow, without prevarication; you dare not deny to me your knowledge of Major Lincoln?"

After a momentary pause, a low voice was heard muttering among the blankets—

"Job knows all the Boston people; and Major Lincoln is a Boston boy."

"But with Major Lincoln you had a more particular acquaintance.—Restrain your impatience, men; these questions lead directly to the facts you wish to know." The rioters, who were profoundly ignorant of what sort of facts they were to be made acquainted with by this examination, looked at each other in uneasy doubt, but soon settled down again into their former deep silence.—"You know him better than any other gentleman of the army?"

"He promised Job to keep off the grannies, and Job agreed to run his ar'n'ds."

"Such an arrangement betrays a greater intimacy than is usual between a wise man and a fool! If you are then so close in league with him, I demand what has become of your associate?"

The young man made no reply.

"You are thought to know the reasons why he has left his friends," returned Polwarth, "and I now demand that you declare them."

"Declare!" repeated the simpleton, in his most unmeaning and helpless manner—"Job was never good at his schooling."

"Nay, then, if you are obstinate, and will not answer, I must withdraw, and permit these brave grenadiers to work their will on you."

This threat served to induce Job to raise his head, and assume that attitude and look of instinctive watchfulness that he had so recently abandoned. A slight movement of the crowd followed, and the terrible words of "Blood for blood!" again passed among them in sullen murmurs. The helpless youth, whom we have been obliged to call an idiot, for want of a better term, and because his mental imbecility removed him without the

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pale of legal responsibility, now stared wildly about him, with an increasing expression of reason, that might be ascribed to the force of that inward fire which preyed upon his vitals, and which seemed to purify the spirit in proportion as it consumed the material dross of his existence.

"It's ag'in the laws of the Bay, to beat and torment a fellow-creature," he said, with a solemn earnestness in his voice, that would have melted hearts of ordinary softness; "and what is more it's ag'in His holy book! If you hadn't made oven-wood of the Old North, and a horse-stable of the Old South, you might have gone to hear such expounding as would have made the hair rise on your wicked heads!"

The cries of "Have done wid his foolery!" —"The imp is playing his games on us!"— "As if his wooden mockery was a church at all fit for a ra'al Christian!"—were heard on every side, and they were succeeded by the often repeated and appalling threat of "Blood for blood!"

"Fall back, men, fall back!" cried Polwarth, flourishing his walking-stick in such a manner as effectually to enforce his orders; "wait for his confession before you judge.—Fellow, this is the last and trying appeal to your truth—your life most probably depends on the answer. You are known to have been in arms against the crown.—Nay, I myself saw you in the field on that day when the troops a-a-a—countermarched from Lexington; since when you are known to have joined the rebels while the army went out to storm the intrenchment on the heights of Charlestown." At this point in the recapitulation of the offences of Job, the captain was suddenly appalled by a glimpse at the dark and threatening looks that encircled him, and he concluded with a laudable readiness —"on that glorious day when his majesty's troops scattered your provincial rabble like so many sheep driven from their pastures by dogs!".

The humane ingenuity of Polwarth was rewarded by a burst of loud and savage laughter. Encouraged by this evidence of his power over his auditors, the worthy captain proceeded with an increased confidence in his own eloquence.

"On that glorious day," he continued, gradually warming with his subject, "many a gallant gentleman, and hundreds of fearless privates, met their fate. Some fell in open and manly fight, and according to the chances of regular warfare. Some—he-e-m—some have been mutilated; and will carry the marks of their glory with them to the grave." His voice grew a little thick and husky as he proceeded; but, shaking off his weakness, he ended with an energy that he intended should curdle the heart of the prisoner,—"while, fellow, some have been murdered!"

"Blood for blood!" was heard again passing its fearful round. Without attempting any longer to repress the rising spirit of the rioters, Polwarth continued his interrogatories, entirely led away by the strength of his own feelings on this sensitive subject.

"Remember you such a man as Dennis M'Fuse?" he demanded in a voice of thunder; "he that was treacherously slain in your inmost trenches, after the day was won! Answer me, knave, were you not among the rabble, and did not your own vile hand the bloody deed?"

A few words were heard from Job, in a low, muttering tone, of which only "the rake-hellies," and "the people will teach 'em the law!" were sufficiently distinct to be understood.

"Murder him! part him sowl from body!" exclaimed the fiercest of the grenadiers.

"Hold!" cried Polwarth; "but one moment more—I would relieve my mind from the debt I owe his memory. Speak, fellow; what know you of the death of the commander of these brave grenadiers?"

Job, who had listened to his words attentively, though his uneasy eyes still continued to watch the slightest movements of his foes, now turned to the speaker with a look of foolish triumph, and answered—

"The 18th came up the hill, shouting like roaring lions! but the Royal Irish had a death-howl, that evening, over their tallest man!"

Polwarth trembled with the violence of the passions that beset him; but, while with one hand he motioned to the men to keep back, with the other he produced the battered gorget from his pocket, and held it before the eyes of the simpleton.

"Know you this?" he demanded; "who sent the bullet through this fatal hole?"

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Job took the ornament, and for a moment regarded it with an unconscious look. But his countenance gradually lighting with a ray of unusual meaning, he laughed in scornful exultation, as he answered—

"Though Job is a fool, he can shoot!"

Polwarth started back aghast, while the fierce resentments of his ruder listeners broke through all restraint. They raised a loud and savage shout, as one man, filling the building with hoarse execrations and cries for vengeance. Twenty expedients to destroy their captive were named in a breath, and with all the characteristic vehemence of their nation. Most of them would have been irregularly adopted, had not the man who attended the burning hemp caught up a bundle of the flaming combustible, and shouted aloud—

"Smodder him in the fiery flames!—he's an imp of darkness; burren him, in his rags, from before the face of man!"

The barbarous proposition was received with a sort of frenzied joy, and in another moment a dozen handfuls of the oakum were impending above the devoted head of the helpless lad. Job made a feeble attempt to avert the dreadful fate that threatened him, but he could offer no other resistance than his own weakened arm, and the abject moanings of his impotent mind. He was enveloped in a cloud of black smoke, through which the forked flames had already begun to play, when a woman burst into the throng, casting the fiery combustibles from her, on either side, as she advanced, with a strength that seemed supernatural. When she had reached the bed, she tore aside the smoking pile with hands that disregarded the heat, and placed herself before the victim, like a fierce lioness, at bay, in defence of her whelps. In this attitude she stood an instant, regarding the rioters with a breast that heaved with passions too strong for utterance, when she found her tongue, and vented her emotions with all the fearlessness of a woman's indignation.

"Ye monsters in the shape of men, what is't ye do?" she exclaimed, in a voice that rose above the tumult, and had the effect to hush every mouth. "Have ye bodies without hearts? the forms without the bowels of the creatures of God? Who made you judges and punishers of sins? Is there a father among you, let him come and view the anguish of a dying child! Is there a son, let him draw near, and look upon a mother's sorrow! Oh! ye savages, worse than the beasts of the howling wilderness, who have mercy on their kinds, what is't ye do—what is't ye do?"

The air of maternal intrepidity with which this burst from the heart was uttered, could not fail to awe the worst passions of the rioters, who gazed on each other in stupid wonder, as if uncertain how to act. The hushed and momentary stillness was, however, soon broken once more by the low, murmuring threat of "Blood for blood!"

"Cowards! dastards! soldiers in name, and demons in your deeds!" continued the undaunted Abigail—"come ye here to taste of human blood? Go—away with you to the hills! and face the men of the Bay, who stand ready to meet you with arms in their hands, and come not hither to bruise the broken reed! Poor, suffering, and stricken as he is, by a hand far mightier than yours, my child will meet you there, to your shame, in the cause of his country and the law!"

This taunt was too bitter for the unnurtured tempers to which she appealed, and the dying spark of their resentment was at once kindled into a blaze by the galling gibe.

The rioters were again in motion, and the cry of "Burn the hag and the imp together!" was fiercely raised, when a man of a stout, muscular frame forced his way into the centre of the crowd, making room for the passage of a female, whose gait and attire, though her person was concealed by her mantle, announced her to be of a rank altogether superior to the usual guests of the warehouse. The unexpected appearance, and lofty, though gentle bearing of this unlooked-for visitor, served to quell the rising uproar, which was immediately succeeded by so deep a silence, that a whisper could have been heard in that throng, which so lately resounded with violent tumult and barbarous execrations.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

"Ay, sir, you shall find me reasonable; if it be so, I shall do that that is reason."—*Slender*.

During the close of the foregoing scene, Polwarth was in a bewildered state, that rendered him utterly incapable of exertion, either to prevent or to assist the evil intentions of the soldiery. His discretion and all his better feelings were certainly on the side of humanity, but the idle vaunt of the simpleton had stirred anew the natural thirst for vengeance. He recognized at the first glance, in the wan, but speaking lineaments of the mother of Job, those faded remnants of beauty that he had traced, so lately, in the squalid female attendant who was seen lingering near the grave of Mrs. Lechmere. As she rushed before the men, with all the fearlessness of a mother who stood in defence of her child, the brightness of her dark eyes, aided as they were by the strong glare from the scattered balls of fire, and the intense expression of maternal horror that shone in every feature of her countenance, had imparted to her appearance a dignity and interest that greatly served to quell the unusual and dangerous passions that beset him. He was on the point of aiding her appeal by his authority and advice, when the second interruption to the brutal purpose of the men occurred, as just related. The effect of this strange appearance, in such a place, and at such a time, was not less instant on the captain than on the vulgar throng who surrounded him. He remained a silent and an attentive spectator.

The first sensation of the lady in finding herself in the centre of such a confused and unexpected throng, was unequivocally that of an alarmed and shrinking delicacy; but, forgetting her womanish apprehensions in the next moment, she collected the powers of her mind, like one sustained by high and laudable intentions, and, dropping the silken folds of her calash, exhibited the pale, but lovely countenance of Cecil to the view of the wondering bystanders. After a moment of profound silence, she spoke—

"I know not why I find this fierce collection of faces around the sick-bed of that unfortunate young man," she said; "but if it be with evil purpose, I charge you to relent, as you love the honor of your gallant profession, or fear the power of your leaders. I boast myself a soldier's wife, and promise you, in the name of one who has the ear of Howe, pardon for what is past, or punishment for your violence, as you conduct yourselves."

The rude listeners stared at each other in irresolute hesitation, seeming already to waver in their purpose, when the old grenadier, whose fierceness had so nearly cost Job his life, gruffly replied—

"If you're an officer's lady, madam, you'll be knowing how to feel for the fri'nds of him that's dead and gone. I put it to the face of your ladyship's reason, if it's not too much for men to bear,—and they such men as the 18ths,—to hear a fool boasting on the highways and through the streets of the town, that he has been the death of the like of Captain M'Fuse, of the grenadiers of that same radg'ment!"

"I believe I understand you, friend," returned Cecil, "for I have heard it whispered that the young man was believed to aid the Americans on the bloody day to which you allude—but if it is not lawful to kill in battle, what are you, whose whole trade is war?"

She was interrupted by half a dozen eager, though respectful voices, muttering, in the incoherent and vehement manner of their country, "It's all a difference, my lady!"—"Fair fighting isn't foul fighting, and foul fighting is murder!"—with many other similar half-formed and equally intelligible remonstrances. When this burst was ended, the same grenadier, who had before spoken, took on himself the office of explaining.

"If your ladyship spoke never a word again, ye've said the truth this time," he answered, "though it isn't exactly the truth at all. When a man is kill't in the fair war, it's a godsend; and no true Irishman will gainsay the same; but skulking behind a dead body, and taking aim into the f'atures of a fellow-cr'ature, is what we complain of against the bloody-minded rascal. Besides, wasn't the day won? and even *his* death couldn't give *them* the victory!"

"I know not all these nice distinctions in your dreadful calling, friend," Cecil replied, "but I have heard that many fell after the troops mounted the works."

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"That did they; sure your ladyship is knowing all about it! and it's the more need that some should be punished for the murders! It's hard to tell when we've got the day with men who make a fight of it after they are fairly baitin!"

"That others suffered under similar circumstances," continued Cecil, with a quivering lip, and a tremulous motion of her eyelids, "I well know; but had never supposed it more than the usual fortune of every war. But even if this youth has erred—look at him!—is he an object for the resentment of men who pride themselves on meeting their enemies on equal terms? He has long been visited by a blow from a hand far mightier than yours, and even now is laboring, in addition to all other misfortunes, under that dangerous distemper whose violence seldom spares those it seizes. Nay, you, in the blindness of your anger, expose yourselves to its attacks; and when you think only of revenge, may become its victims!"

The crowd insensibly fell back as she spoke, and a large circle was left around the bed of Job, while many in the rear stole silently from the building, with a haste that betrayed how completely apprehension had got the better of their more evil passions. Cecil paused but an instant, and pursued her advantage.

"Go," she said; "leave this dangerous vicinity. I have business with this young man, touching the interests, if not the life, of one dear, deservedly dear, to the whole army, and would be left alone with him and his mother. Here is money—retire to your own quarters, and endeavor to avert the danger you have so wantonly braved, by care and regimen. Go; all shall be forgotten and pardoned."

The reluctant grenadier took her gold, and, perceiving that he was already deserted by most of his companions, he made an awkward obeisance to the fair being before him, and withdrew, not without, however, casting many a savage and sullen glance at the miserable wretch who had been thus singularly rescued from his vengeance. Not a soldier now remained in the building; and the noisy and rapid utterance of the retiring party, as each vehemently recounted his deeds, soon became inaudible in the distance.

Cecil then turned to those who remained, and cast a rapid glance at each individual of the party. The instant she encountered the wondering look of Polwarth, the blood mantled her pale features once more, and her eyes fell, for an instant, in embarrassment, to the floor.

"I trust we have been drawn here for a similar purpose, Captain Polwarth," she said, when the slight confusion had passed away—"the welfare of a common friend?"

"You have not done me injustice," he replied. "When the sad office, which your fair cousin charged me with, was ended, I hastened hither to follow a clew which, I have reason to believe, will conduct us to——"

"What me most desire to find," said Cecil, involuntarily glancing her anxious eyes towards the other spectators. "But our first duty is humanity. Cannot this miserable young man be conveyed to his own apartment, and have his hurts examined?"

"It may be done now, or after our examination," returned the captain, with a cool indifference that caused Cecil to look up at him in surprise. Perceiving the unfavorable impression his apathy had produced, Polwarth turned carelessly to a couple of men who were still curious lookers-on, at the outer door of the building, and called to them—"Here, Shearflint, Meriton, remove the fellow into yonder room."

The servants in waiting, who had been hitherto wondering witnesses of all that passed, received this mandate with strong disgust. Meriton was loud in his murmurs, and approached the verge of disobedience, before he consented to touch such an object of squalid misery. As Cecil, however, enforced the order by her wishes, the disagreeable duty was performed, and Job replaced on his pallet in the tower, from which he had been rudely dragged an hour before by the soldiers.

At the moment when all danger of further violence disappeared, Abigail had sunk on some of the lumber of the apartment, where she remained during the removal of her child, in a sort of stupid apathy. When, however, she perceived that they were now surrounded by those who were bent on deeds of mercy rather than of anger, she slowly

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followed into the little room, and became an anxious observer of the succeeding events.

Polwarth seemed satisfied with what had been done for Job, and now stood aloof, in sullen attendance on the pleasure of Cecil. The latter, who had directed every movement with female tenderness and care, bade the servants retire into the outer room, and wait her orders. When Abigail, therefore, took her place, in silence, near the bed of her child, there remained present, besides herself and the sick, only Cecil, the captain, and the unknown man, who had apparently led the former to the warehouse. In addition to the expiring flames of the oakum, the feeble light of a candle was shed through the room, merely rendering the gloomy misery of its tenants more striking.

Notwithstanding the high but calm resolution which Cecil had displayed in the foregoing scene with the rioters, and which still manifested itself in the earnest brightness of her intelligent eye, she appeared willing to profit by the duskiness of the apartment, to conceal her expressive features from the gaze of even the forlorn female. She placed herself in one of the shadows of the room, and partly raised the calash, by a graceful movement of one of her hands, while she addressed the simpleton.

"Though I have not come hither with any intent to punish, nor in any manner to intimidate you with threats, Job Pray," she said, with an earnestness that rendered the soft tones of her voice doubly impressive—"yet have I come to question you on matters that it would be wrong, as well as cruel in you, to misrepresent, or in any manner to conceal——"

"You have little cause to fear that anything but the truth will be uttered by my child," interrupted Abigail. "The same power that destroyed his reason has dealt tenderly with his heart—the boy knows no guile—would to God the same could be said of the sinful woman who bore him!"

"I hope the character you give your son will be supported by his conduct," replied Cecil; "with this assurance of his integrity, I will directly question him. But that you may see I take no idle liberty with the young man, let me explain my motives!" She hesitated a moment, and averted her face unconsciously, as she continued—"I should think, Abigail Pray, that my person must be known to you?"

"It is—it is," returned the impatient woman, who appeared to feel the feminine and polished elegance of the other a reproach to her own misery—"you are the happy and wealthy heiress of her whom I have seen this day laid in her vault. The grave will open for all alike! the rich and the poor, the happy as well as the wretched! Yes—yes, I know you!—you are the bride of a rich man's son!"

Cecil shook back the dark tresses that had fallen about her countenance, and raised her face, tinged with its richest bloom, as she answered, with an air of matronly dignity—

"If you then know of my marriage, you will at once perceive that I have the interest of a wife in Major Lincoln—I would wish to learn his movements of your son."

"Of my boy! of Job! from the poor despised child of poverty and disease, would you learn tidings of your husband?—no—no, young lady, you mock us;—he is not worthy to be in the secrets of one so great and happy!"

"Yet am I deceived if he is not! Has there not been one called Ralph, a frequent inmate of your dwelling during the past year? and has he not been concealed here within a very few hours?"

Abigail started at this question, though she did not hesitate to answer without prevarication—

"It is true. If I am to be punished for harboring a being that comes I know whence, and goes I know whither, who can read the heart, and knows what man, by his own limited powers, could never know, I must submit. He was here yesterday; he may be here again to-night; for he comes and goes at will. Your generals and army may interfere, but such as I dare not forbid it!"

"Who accompanied him when he departed last?" asked Cecil, in a voice so low, that, but for the profound stillness of the place, it would have been inaudible.

"My child—my weak, unmeaning, miserable child!" said Abigail, with a reckless promptitude that seemed to court any termination to her misery, however sudden or adverse. "If it be treasonable to follow in

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the footsteps of that nameless man, Job has much to answer for!"

"You mistake my purpose—good, rather than evil, will attend your answers, should they be found true."

"True!" repeated the woman, ceasing the rocking motion of her body, and looking proudly up into the anxious face of Cecil—"but you are great and powerful, and are privileged to open the wounds of the unhappy!"

"If I have said anything to hurt the feelings of a child, I shall deeply regret the words," said Cecil, with gentle fervor—"I would rather be your friend than your oppressor, as you will learn when occasion offers."

"No—no—*you* can never be a friend to *me!*" exclaimed the woman, shuddering; "the wife of Major Lincoln ought never to serve the interests of Abigail Pray!"

The simpleton, who had apparently lain in dull indifference to what was passing, raised himself now from among his rags, and said, with foolish pride—

"Major Lincoln's lady has come to see Job, because Job is a gentleman's son!"

"You are the child of sin and misery!" groaned Abigail, burying her head in her cloak—"would that you had never seen the light of day!"

"Tell me, then, Job, whether Major Lincoln himself has paid you this compliment, as well as I," said Cecil, without regarding the conduct of the mother—"when did you see him last?"

"Perhaps I can put these questions in a more intelligible manner," said the stranger, with a meaning glance of his eye towards Cecil, that she appeared instantly to comprehend. He turned then to Job, whose countenance he studied closely, for several moments, before he continued—"Boston must be a fine place for parades and shows, young man; do you ever go to see the soldiers exercise?"

"Job always keeps time in the marchings," returned the simpleton; "'tis a grand sight to see the grannies treading it off to the awful sound of drums and trumpets!"

"And Ralph," said the other, soothingly—"does he march in their company too?"

"Ralph! he's a great warrior! he teaches the people their trainings, out on the hills—Job sees him there every time he goes for the major's provisions."

"This requires some explanation," said the stranger.

"'Tis easily obtained," returned the observant Polwarth. "The young man has been the bearer of certain articles, periodically, from the country into the town, during the last six months, under the favor of a flag."

The man mused a moment before he pursued the subject.

"When were you last among the rebels, Job?" he at length asked.

"You had best not call the people rebels," muttered the young man, sullenly, "for they won't put up with bitter names!"

"I was wrong, indeed," said the stranger. "But when went you last for provisions?"

"Job got in last Sabba'-day morning; and that's only yesterday!"

"How happened it, fellow, that you did not bring the articles to me?" demanded Polwarth, with a good deal of impatient heat.

"He has unquestionably a sufficient reason for the apparent neglect," said the cautious and soothing stranger. "You brought them here, I suppose, for some good reason?"

"Ay! to feed his own gluttony!" muttered the irritated captain.

The mother of the young man clasped her hands together convulsively, and made an effort to rise and speak; but she sunk again into her humble posture, as if choked by emotions that were too strong for utterance.

This short, but impressive pantomime was unnoticed by the stranger, who continued his inquiries in the same cool and easy manner as before.

"Are they yet here?" he asked.

"Certain," said the unsuspecting simpleton; "Job has hid them till Major Lincoln comes back. Both Ralph and Major Lincoln forgot to tell Job what to do with the provisions."

"In that case I am surprised you did not pursue them with your load."

"Everybody thinks Job's a fool," muttered the young man; "but he knows too much to be lugging provisions out ag'in among the people. Why!" he continued, raising himself, and speaking, with a bright glare danc-

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ing across his eyes, that betrayed how much he prized the envied advantage—"the Baymen came down with cart-loads of things to eat while the town is filled with hunger!"

"True. I had forgotten they were gone out among the Americans—of course they went under the flag that you bore in!"

"Job didn't bring any flag—insygns carry the flags! He brought a turkey, a grand ham, and a little sa'ce—there wasn't any flag among them."

At the sound of these eatables, the captain pricked up his ears, and he probably would have again violated the rigid rules of decorum had not the stranger continued his questions.

"I see the truth of all you say, my sensible fellow," he observed. "It was easy for Ralph and Major Lincoln to go out by means of the same privilege that you used to enter?"

"To be sure," muttered Job, who, tired of the questions, had already dropped his head again among his blankets—"Ralph knows the way—he's Boston born!"

The stranger turned to the attentive bride, and bowed, as if he were satisfied with the result of his examination. Cecil understood the expression of his countenance, and made a movement towards the place where Abigail Pray was seated on a chest, betraying, by the renewed rocking of her body, and the low groans that from time to time escaped her, the agony of mind she endured.

"My first care," she said, speaking to the mother of Job, "shall be to provide for your wants; after which I may profit by what we have now gathered from your son."

"Care not for me and mine!" returned Abigail, in a tone of bitter resignation. "The last blow is struck, and it behooves such as we to bow our heads to it in submission. Riches and plenty could not save your grandmother from the tomb, and perhaps Death may take pity, ere long, on me. What do I say, sinner that I am? can I never bring my rebellious heart to wait his time?"

Shocked at the miserable despair that the other exhibited, and suddenly recollecting the similar evidences of a guilty life that the end of Mrs. Lechmere had revealed, Cecil continued silent, in sensitive distress. After a moment, to collect her thoughts, she said, with the meekness of a Christian, united to the soothing gentleness of her sex—

"We are surely permitted to administer to our earthly wants, whatever may have been our transgressions. At a proper time I will not be denied in my wish to serve you. Let us now go," she added, addressing her unknown companion. Then, observing Polwarth making an indication to advance to her assistance, she gently motioned him back, and anticipated his offer, by saying, "I thank you, sir—but I have Meriton, and this worthy man, besides my own maid without—I will not further interfere with your particular objects."

As she spoke, she bestowed a melancholy, though sweet smile on the captain, and left the tower and the building, before he could presume to dispute her pleasure. Notwithstanding Cecil and her companion had obtained from Job all that he could expect, or in fact had desired to know, Polwarth lingered in the room, making those preparations that should indicate an intention to depart. He found, at length, that his presence was entirely disregarded by both mother and child. The one was still sitting, with her head bowed to her bosom, abandoned to her own sorrows, while the other had sunk into his customary dull lethargy, giving no other signs of life than by his labored and audible breathing. The captain, for a moment, looked upon the misery of the apartment, which wore a still more dreary aspect under the dull light of the paltry candle, as well as at the disease and suffering which were too plainly exhibited in the persons of its abject tenants; but the glance at neither served to turn him from his purpose. Temptation had beset the humble follower of Epicurus, in a form that never failed to subdue his most philosophic resolutions; and, in this instance, it prevailed once more over his humanity. Approaching the pallet of the simpleton, he spoke to him in a sharp voice, saying—

"You must reveal to me what you have done with the provisions with which Mr. Seth Sage has intrusted you, young man—I cannot overlook so gross a violation of duty, in a matter of such singular importance. Unless you wish to have the grannies of the 18th back upon you, speak at once, and speak truly."

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Job continued obstinately silent, but Abigail raised her head, and answered for her child—

"He has never failed to carry the things to the quarters of the major, whenever he got back. No, no—if my boy was so graceless as to steal, it would not be *him* that he would rob!"

"I hope so—I hope so, good woman; but this is a sort of temptation to which men yield easily in times of scarcity," returned the impatient captain, who probably felt some inward tokens of his own frailty in such matters.—"If they had been delivered, would not I have been consulted concerning their disposition? The young man acknowledges that he quitted the American camp yesterday at an early hour."

"No, no," said Job; "Ralph made him come away on Saturda'-night. He left the people without his dinner!".

"And repaid his loss by eating the stores! Is this your honesty, fellow?"

"Ralph was in such a hurry that he wouldn't stop to eat. Ralph's a proper warrior, but he doesn't seem to know how sweet it is to eat!"

"Glutton! gormandizer! thou ostrich of a man!" exclaimed the angry Polwarth—"is it not enough that you have robbed me of my own, but you must make me more conscious of my loss by thy silly prating?"

"If you really suspect my child of doing wrong to his employers," said Abigail, "you know neither his temper nor his breeding. I will answer for him, and with bitterness of heart do I say it, that nothing in the shape of food has entered his mouth for many long and weary hours. Hear you not his piteous longings for nourishment? God, who knows all hearts, will hear and believe his cry!"

"What say you, woman?" cried Polwarth, aghast with horror, "not eaten, did you say?—Why hast thou not, unnatural mother, provided for his wants?—why has he not shared in your meals?"

Abigail looked up into his face with eyes that gleamed with hopeless want, as she answered—

"Would I willingly see the child of my body perish of hunger? The last crumb he had was all that was left me, and that came from the hands of one who, in better justice, should have sent me poison!"

"Nab don't know of the bone that Job found before the barracks," said the young man, feebly; "I wonder if the king knows how sweet bones are?"

"And the provisions, the stores!" cried Polwarth, nearly choking—"foolish boy, what hast thou done with the provisions?"

"Job knew the graunies couldn't find them under that oakum," said the simpleton, raising himself to point out their place of concealment, with silly exultation—"when Major Lincoln comes back, maybe he'll give Nab and Job the bones to pick!"

Polwarth was no sooner made acquainted with the situation of the precious stores, than he tore them from their concealment with the violence of a maniac. As he separated the articles with an unsteady hand, he rather panted than breathed; and during the short operation, every feature in his honest face was working with extraordinary emotion. Now and then he muttered in an undertone—"No food!"—"Suffering of inanition!" or some such expressive exclamation, that sufficiently explained the current of his thoughts. When all was fairly exposed, he shouted, in a tremendous voice—

"Shearflint! thou rascal! Shearflint—where have you hidden yourself?"

The reluctant menial knew how dangerous it was to hesitate answering a summons uttered in such a voice, and while his master was yet repeating his cries, he appeared at the door of the little apartment, with a face expressive of the deepest attention.

"Light up the fire, thou prince of idlers!" Polwarth continued in the same high strain; "here is food, and there is hunger! God be praised that I am the man who is permitted to bring the two acquainted! Here, throw on oakum—light up, light up!"

As these rapid orders were accompanied by a corresponding earnestness of action, the servant, who knew his master's humor, sat himself most diligently at work to comply. A pile of the tarred combustible was placed on the dreary and empty hearth, and by a touch of the candle, it was lighted into a blaze. As the roar of the chimney and the bright glare were heard and seen, the mother and child both turned their longing eyes

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toward the busy actors in the scene. Polwarth threw aside his cane, and commenced slicing the ham with a dexterity that denoted great practice, as well as an eagerness that renewed the credit of his disgraced humility.

"Bring wood—hand down that apology for a gridiron—make coals, make coals at once, rascal," he said, at short intervals—"God forgive me, that I should ever have meditated evil to one suffering under the heaviest of curses!—D'ye hear, thou Shearflint? bring more wood; I shall be ready for the fire in a minute."

"'Tis impossible, sir," said the worried domestic; "I have brought the smallest chip there is to be found—wood is too precious in Boston to be lying in the streets."

"Where do you keep your fuel, woman?" demanded the captain, unconscious that he addressed her in the same rough strain that he used to his menial—"I am ready to put down."

"You see it all! you see it all!" said Abigail, in the submissive tones of a stricken conscience; "the judgment of God has not fallen on me singly!"

"No wood! no provisions!" exclaimed Polwarth, speaking with difficulty—then, dashing his hand across his eyes, he continued to his man, in a voice whose hoarseness he intended should conceal his emotion—"thou villain, Shearflint, come hither—unstrap my leg."

The servant looked at him in wonder,—but an impatient gesture hastened his compliance.

"Split it into ten thousand fragments; 'tis seasoned and ready for the fire. The best of them, they of flesh I mean, are but useless encumbrances, after all! A cook wants hands, eyes, nose, and palate, but I see no use for a leg!"

While he was speaking, the philosophic captain seated himself on the hearth with great indifference, and, by the aid of Shearflint, the culinary process was soon in a state of forwardness.

"There are people," resumed the diligent Polwarth, who did not neglect his avocation while speaking, "that eat but twice a day; and some who eat but once; though I never knew any man thrive who did not supply nature in four substantial and regular meals. These sieges are damnable visitations on humanity, and there should be plans invented to conduct a war without them. The moment you begin to starve a soldier, he grows tame and melancholy: feed him, and defy the devil! How is it, my worthy fellow? do you like your ham running or dry?"

The savory smell of the meat had caused the suffering invalid to raise his feverish body, and he sat watching, with greedy looks, every movement of his unexpected benefactor. His parched lips were already working with impatience, and every glance of his glassy eye betrayed the absolute dominion of physical want over his feeble mind. To this question he made the simple and touching reply of—

"Job isn't particular in his eating."

"Neither am I," returned the methodical gourmand, returning a piece of the meat to the fire, that Job had already devoured in imagination—"one would like to get it up well, notwithstanding the hurry. A single turn more, and it will be fit for the mouth of a prince. Bring hither that trencher, Shearflint—it is idle to be particular about crockery in so pressing a case. Greasy scoundrel, would you dish a ham in its gravy? What a nosegay it is after all! Come hither; help me to the bed."

"May the Lord, who sees and notes each kind thought of his creatures, bless and reward you for this care of my forlorn boy!" exclaimed Abigail, in the fulness of her heart; "but will it be prudent to give such strong nourishment to one in a burning fever?"

"What else would you give, woman? I doubt not he owes his disease to his wants. An empty stomach is like an empty pocket, a place for the devil to play his gambols in. 'Tis your small doctor who prates of a meagre regimen. Hunger is a distemper of itself, and no reasonable man who is above listening to quackery will believe it can be a remedy. Food is the prop of life—and eating, like a crutch to a maimed man.—Shearflint, examine the ashes for the irons of my supporter, and then dish a bit of the meat for the poor woman.—Eat away, my charming boy, eat away!" he continued, rubbing his hands in honest delight, to see the avidity with which the famishing Job received his boon. "The second pleasure in life is to see a hungry man enjoy his meal; the first being more deeply

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seated in human nature. This ham has the true Virginia flavor! Have you such a thing as a spare trencher, Shearflint? It is so near the usual hour, I may as well sup. It is rare, indeed, that a man enjoys two such luxuries at once!"

The tongue of Polwarth ceased the instant Shearflint administered to his wants; the warehouse into which he had so lately entered, with such fell intent, exhibiting the strange spectacle of the captain, sharing, with social communion, in the humble repasts of its hunted and miserable tenants.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"Sir Thurio, give us leave, I pray, awhile;
We have some secrets to confer about."
—*Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

DURING the preceding exhibition of riot and degradation, in the Dock Square, a very different state of things existed beneath the roof of a proud edifice that stood in an adjacent street. As was usual at that hour of the night, the windows of Province-House were brilliant with lights as if in mockery of the naked dreariness of the neighboring church; and every approach to that privileged residence of the representative of royalty was closely guarded by the vigilance of armed men. Into this favored dwelling it now becomes necessary to remove the scene, in order to pursue the thread of our unpretending narrative.

Domestics, in rich military liveries, might be seen gliding from room to room, in the hurry of a banquet—some bearing vessels of the most generous wines into the apartment where Howe entertained the leaders of the royal army, and others returning with the remnants of a feast which, though sumptuously served, having felt the scarcity of the times, had offered more to the eyes than to the appetites of the guests. Idlers, in the loose undress of their martial profession, loitered through the halls; and many a wistful glance, or lingering look, followed the odorous scents, as humbler menials received the viands to transport them into the more secret recesses of the building. Notwithstanding the life and activity which prevailed, every movement was conducted in silence and regularity, the whole of the lively scene affording a happy illustration of the virtues and harmony of order.

Within the walls of that apartment, to which every eye seemed directed as to a common centre, in anticipation of the slightest wish of those who revelled there, all was bright and cheerful. The hearth knew no want of fuel; the coarser workmanship of the floor was hid beneath rich and ample carpets, while the windows were nearly lost within the sweeping folds of curtains of figured damask. Everything wore an air of exquisite comfort, blended with a species of careless elegance. Even the most minute article of the furniture had been transported from that distant country which was then thought to monopolize all the cunning arts of handicraft, to administer to the pleasures of those who, however careless of themselves in moments of trial, courted the most luxurious indulgences in their hours of ease.

Along the centre of this gay apartment was spread the hospitable board of the entertainer. It was surrounded by men in the trappings of high military rank, though here and there might be seen a guest whose plainer attire and dejected countenance betrayed the presence of one or two of those misjudging colonists, whose confidence in the resistless power of the crown began already to waver. The lieutenant of the king held his wonted place at the banquet, his dark visage expressing all the heartiness of a soldier's welcome, while he pointed out this or that favorite amongst an abundant collection of wines, that included the choicest liquors of Europe.

"For those who share the mess of a British general, you have encountered rude fare to-day, gentlemen," he cried; "though, after all, 'tis such as a British soldier knows how to fatten on, in the service of his master. Fill, gentlemen; fill in loyal bumpers; for we have neglected our allegiance."

Each glass now stood sparkling and overcharged with wine, when, after a short and solemn pause, the host pronounced aloud the magical words—"The King."—Every voice echoed the name, after which there literally succeeded a breathless pause; when an old man, in the uniform of an officer of the fleet, first proving his loyalty by flourish-

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ing on high his inverted glass, added, with hearty will—

"God bless him!"

"God bless him!" repeated the graceful leader, who has already been more than once named in these pages; "and grant him a long and glorious reign! and, should there be no treason in the wish, in death, a grave like yourself, worthy admiral—'Sepulcrum sine sordibus extrue.'"

"Like me!" echoed the blunt seaman, whose learning was somewhat impaired by hard and long service—"I am, it is true, none of your cabin-window gentry; but his majesty might stoop lower than by favoring a faithful servant, like me, with his gracious presence."

"Your pardon, sir; I should have included, 'permissum arbitrio.'"

The equivoque had barely excited a smile, when the sedate countenance of the commander-in-chief indicated that the subject was too serious for a jest. Nor did the naval chieftain appear to relish the unknown tongue; for, quite as much, if not a little more, offended with the liberty taken with his own name, than with the privileged person of the sovereign, he somewhat smartly retorted—

"Permitted or not permitted, I command the fleet of his majesty in these waters, and it shall be noted as a cheerful day in our log-books, when you gentlemen of the army dismiss us to our duty again, on the high-seas. A sailor will grow as tired of doing nothing, as ever a soldier did of work, and I like 'elbow-room,' even in my coffin—ha, ha, ha—what d'ye think of that, master wit?—ha, ha, ha,—what d'ye say to that?"

"Quite fair, well deserved, and cuttingly severe, admiral," returned the undisturbed soldier, smiling with perfect self-possession, as he sipped his wine. "But as you find confinement and leisure so irksome, I will presume to advise your seizing some of these impudent Yankees, who look into the port so often, not only robbing us of our stores, but offending so many loyal eyes with their traitorous presence."

"I command a parley to be beaten," interrupted the commander-in-chief, "and a truce to further hostilities. When all have done their duty, and have done it so well, even wit must respect their conduct. Let me advise you to sound the contents of that dusky-looking bottle, Mr. Graves; I think you will approve the situation as an anchorage for the night."

The honest old seaman instantly drowned his displeasure in a glass of the generous liquor, and, smacking his lips after the potations, for he repeated the first on the moment, he exclaimed—

"Ah! you are too stationary, by half, to stir up the soul of your liquors. Wine should never slumber on its lees until it has been well rolled in the trough of a sea for a few months; then, indeed, you may set it asleep, and yourself by the side of it, if you like a cat's nap."

"As orthodox a direction for the ripening of wine as was ever given by a bishop to his butler!" exclaimed his adversary. Another significant glance from his dark-looking superior again checked his wilful playfulness, when Howe profited by the silence, to say with the frank air of a liberal host—

"As motion is, just now, denied us, the only means I can devise, to prevent my wine from slumbering on its lees, is to drink it."

"Besides which, we are threatened with a visit from Mr. Washington, and his thirsty followers, who may save us all trouble in the matter, unless we prove industrious. In such a dilemma, Mr. Graves will not hesitate to pledge me in a glass, though it should be only to disappoint the rebels!" added Burgoyne, making a graceful inclination to the half-offended seaman.

"Ay, ay, I would do much more disagreeable things to cheat the rascals of their plunder," returned the mollified admiral, good-naturedly nodding his head before he swallowed his bumper.—"If there be any real danger of the loss of such liquid amber as this, 'twould be as well to send it along-side my ship, and I will hoist it in, and find it a berth, though it shares my own cot. I believe I command a fortress which neither Yankee, Frenchman, nor Don, would like to besiege, unless at a respectful distance."

The officers around him looked exceedingly grave, exchanging glances of great meaning, though all continued silent, as if the common subject of their meditations was too delicate to be loudly uttered in such a presence. At

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length the second in command, who still felt the coldness of his superior, and who had, hitherto, said nothing during the idle dialogue, ventured a remark, with the gravity and distance of a man who was not certain of his welcome.

"Our enemies grow bold as the season advances," he said, "and it is past a doubt that they will find us employment in the coming summer. It cannot be denied but they conduct themselves with great steadiness in all their batteries, especially in this last, at the water-side; nor am I without apprehension that they will yet get upon the islands, and render the situation of the shipping hazardous."

"Get upon the islands! drive the fleet from their anchors!" exclaimed the veteran sailor, in undisguised amazement. "I shall account it a happy day for England, when Washington and his rabble trust themselves within reach of our shot!"

"God grant us a chance at the rascals with the bayonet in the open field," cried Howe, "and an end of these winter quarters! I say winter quarters, for I trust no gentleman can consider this army as besieged by a mob of armed peasants! We hold the town, and they the country; but when the proper time shall come—well, sir, your pleasure," he continued, interrupting himself to speak to an upper servant at his elbow.

The man, who had stood for more than a minute, in an attitude of respectful attention, anxious to catch the eye of his master, muttered his message in a low and hurried voice, as if unwilling to be heard by others, and at the same time conscious of the impropriety of whispering. Most of those around him turned their heads in polite indifference; but the old sailor, who sat too near to be totally deaf, had caught the words, "a lady," which was quite enough to provoke all his merriment, after such a free indulgence of the bottle. Striking his hand smartly on the table, he exclaimed, with a freedom that no other present could have presumed to use —

"A sail! a sail! by George, a sail! under what colors, friend? king's or rebel's? Here has been a blunder, with a vengeance! The cook has certainly been too late, or the lady is too early! ha, ha, ha—Oh! you are wicked, free livers in the army!"

The tough old tar enjoyed his joke exceedingly, chuckling with inward delight at his discovery. He was, however, alone in his merriment, none of the soldiers venturing to understand his allusions, any further than by exchanging a few stolen looks of unusual archness. Howe bit his lips, with obvious vexation, and sternly ordered the man to repeat his errand in a voice that was more audible.

"A lady," said the trembling menial, "wishes to see your excellency, and she waits your pleasure, sir, in the library."

"Among his books, too!" shouted the admiral—"that would have better become you, my joking friend! I say, young man, is the girl young and handsome?"

"By the lightness of her step, sir, I should think her young; but her face was concealed under a hood."

"Ay! ay! the jade comes hooded into the house of the king! Damn me, Howe, but modesty is getting to be a rare virtue amongst you gentlemen on shore!"

"'Tis a plain case against you, sir, for even the servant, as you find, has detected that she is light of carriage," said the smiling Burgoyne, making half a motion toward rising. "It is probably some applicant for relief, or for permission to depart the place. Suffer me to see her, and spare yourself the pain of a refusal."

"Not at all," said Howe, gaining his feet with an alacrity that anticipated the more deliberate movement of the other—"I should be unworthy of the trust I hold, could I not lend an occasional ear to a petition. Gentlemen, as there is a lady in the case, I presume to trespass on your indulgence. Admiral, I commend you to my butler, who is a worthy fellow, and can give you all the cruises of the bottle before you, since it left the island of Madeira."

He inclined his head to his guests, and passed from the room with a hurried step, that did not altogether consult appearances. As he proceeded through the hall, his ears were saluted by another burst from the hearty old seaman, who, however, enjoyed his humor alone, the rest of the party immediatedly turning to other subjects, with well-bred dulness. On entering the room already mentioned, Howe found himself in the pre-

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sence of the female, who, notwithstanding their apparent indifference, was at that very moment occupying the thought, and exercising the ingenuity of every man he had left behind him. Advancing at once to the centre of the apartment, with the ease and freedom of a soldier who felt himself without a superior, he asked, with a politeness somewhat equivocal—

"Why am I favored with this visit? and why has a lady, whose appearance shows she might command friends at any time, assumed this personal trouble?"

"Because I am a supplicant for a favor that might be denied to one who petitioned coldly," returned a soft, tremulous voice, deep within the covering of a silken calash. "As time is wanting to observe the usual forms of applications, I have presumed to come in person, to prevent delay."

"And surely, one like you can have little reason to dread a repulse," said Howe, with an attempt at gallantry, that would have better become the man who had offered to be his substitute. While speaking, he advanced a step nigher to the lady, and, pointing to her hood, he continued—"Would it not be wise to aid your request with a view of a countenance that I am certain can speak better than any words?—whom have I the honor to receive, and what may be the nature of her business?"

"A wife, who seeks her husband," returned the female, dropping the folds of her calash, and exposing to his steady eyes the commanding loveliness of the chaste countenance of Cecil. The sudden annunciation of her character was forced from the lips of the unclaimed bride, by the freedom of a gaze to which she was unused; but the instant she had spoken, her eyes fell on the floor in embarrassment, and she stood deeply blushing at the strength of her own language, though preserving all the apparent composure and dignity of female pride. The English general regarded her beauty for a moment, with a pleased, though doubting eye, before he continued—

"Is he whom you seek within or without the town?"

"I much fear without!"

"And you would follow him into the camp of the rebels?" This is a case that may require some deliberation. I feel assured I entertain a lady of great beauty; might I, in addition, know how to address her?"

"For my name I have no reason to blush," said Cecil, proudly—"'tis noble in the land of our common ancestors, and may have reached the ears of Mr. Howe—I am the child of the late Colonel Dynevor!"

"The niece of Lord Cardonnel!" exclaimed her auditor, in amazement, instantly losing the equivocal freedom of his manner in an air of deep respect—"I have long known that Boston contained such a lady; nor do I forget that she is accused of concealing herself from the attentions of the army, like one of the most obdurate of our foes—attentions which every man in the garrison would be happy to show her, from myself down to the lowest ensign.—Do me the honor to be seated!"

Cecil bowed her acknowledgments, but continued standing—

"I have neither time nor spirits to defend myself from such an imputation," she answered—"though, should my own name prove no passport to your favor, I must claim it in behalf of him I seek."

"Should he be the veriest rebel in the train of Washington, he has great reason to be proud of his fortune!"

"So far from ranking among the enemies of the king, he has already been lavish of his blood in behalf of the crown," returned Cecil, unconsciously raising the calash again, with maiden bashfulness, as she felt the moment was approching when she must declare the name of the man, whose influence over her feelings she had already avowed.

"And he is called—?"

The answer was given to this direct question in a low but distinct voice. Howe started when he heard the well-known name of an officer of so much consideration, though a meaning smile lighted his dark features, as he repeated her words in surprise—

"Major Lincoln! his refusal to return to Europe, in search of health, is then satisfactorily explained. Without the town did you say? there must be some error."

"I fear it is too true!"

The harsh features of the leader contracted again into their sternest look, and it was apparent how much he was disturbed by the intelligence.

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"This is presuming too far on his privilege," he muttered in an undertone.—"Left the place say you, without my knowledge and approbation, young lady?"

"But on no unworthy errand!" cried the almost breathless Cecil, instantly losing sight of herself in her anxiety for Lionel—"private sorrows have driven him to an act, that, at another time, he would be the first to condemn, as a soldier."

Howe maintained a cool, but threatening silence, that was far more appaling than any words can be. The alarmed wife gazed at his lowering face for a minute, as if to penetrate his secret thoughts; then yielding, with the sensitiveness of a woman, to her worst apprehensions, she cried—

"Oh! you would not avail yourself of this confession to do him harm! Has he not bled for you? lingered for months on the verge of the grave, in defence of your cause? and will you now doubt him? Nay, sir, though chance and years may have subjected him, for a time, to your control, he is every way your equal, and will confront each charge before his royal master, let who may bring them against his spotless name?"

"'Twill be necessary," the other coldly replied.

"Nay, hearken not to my weak, unmeaning words," continued Cecil, wringing her hands in doubting distress; "I know not what I say. He has your permission to hold intercourse with the country weekly?"

"For the purpose of obtaining the supplies necessary to his past condition."

"And may he not have gone on such an errand, and under favor of the flag you yourself have cheerfully accorded?"

"In such a case would I not have been spared the pain of this interview?"

Cecil paused a moment, and seemed collecting her scattered faculties, and preparing her mind for some serious purpose. After a little time, she attempted a painful smile, saying, more calmly—

"I had presumed too far on military indulgence, and was even weak enough to believe the request would be granted to my name and situation."

"No name, no situation, no circumstances, can ever render——"

"Speak not the cruel words, lest they once more drive me from my recollection," interrupted Cecil. "First hear me, sir—listen to a wife and a daughter, and you will recall the cruel sentence."

Without waiting for a reply, she advanced with a firm and proud step to the door of the room, passing her astonished companion with an eye and a face beaming with the fulness of her object. In the outer passage she beckoned from among the loiterers in the hall, to the stranger who had accompanied her in the visit to the warehouse, and when he had approached, and entered the room, the door once more closed, leaving the spectators without wondering whence such a vision of purity could have made its way within the sullied walls of Province-House.

Many long and impatient minutes were passed by the guests in the banqueting-room, during the continuance of this mysterious interview. The jests of the admiral began to flag, just as his companions were inclined to think they were most merited, and the conversation assumed that broken and disjointed character which betrays the wandering of the speaker's thoughts.

At length a bell rang, and orders came from the commander-in-chief, to clear the hall of its curious idlers. When none were left but the regular domestics of the family, Howe appeared, supporting Cecil, closely hooded, to the conveyance that awaited her presence at the gate. The air of their master communicated a deep respect to the manners of the observant menials, who crowded about their persons, to aid the departure, with officious zeal. The amazed sentinels dropped their arms, with the usual regularity, to their chieftain, as he passed to the outer portal in honor of his unknown companion, and eyes met the expressive glances of eyes, as all who witnessed the termination of this visit sought, in the countenances of those around them, some solution of its object.

When Howe resumed his seat at the table, another attempt was made by the admiral to renew the subject; but it was received with an air so cold, and a look so pointedly severe, that even the careless son of the ocean forgot his humor under the impression of so dark a frown.

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CHAPTER XXIX.

"Nor martial shout, nor minstrel tone,
Announced their march."—SCOTT.

CECIL suffered the night to advance a little, before she left Tremont Street, to profit by the permission to leave the place, her communication had obtained from the English general. It was, however, far from late when she took leave of Agnes, and commenced her expedition, still attended by Meriton and the unknown man, with whom she has already, more than once, made her appearance in our pages. At the lower part of the town she left her vehicle, and pursuing the route of several devious and retired streets, soon reached the margin of the water. The wharves where deserted and still. Indicating the course by her own light and hurried footsteps, to her companions, the youthful bride moved unhesitatingly along the rough planks, until her progress was checked by a large basin, between two of the ordinary wooden piers which line the shores of the place. Here she paused for a ment, in doubt, as if fearful there had been some mistake, when the figure of a boy was seen advancing out of the shadows of a neighboring store-house.

"I fear you have lost your way," he said, when within a few feet of her, where he stood, apparently examining the party with rigid scrutiny. "May I venture to ask whom or what you seek?"

"One who is sent hither on private duty, by orders from the commander-in-chief."

"I see but two," returned the lad, hesitating—"whare is the third?"

"He lingers in the distance," said Cecil, pointing to Meriton, whose footsteps were much more guarded than those of his mistress. "Three is our number, and we are all present."

"I beg a thousand pardons," returned the youth, dropping the folds of a sailor's overcoat, under which he had concealed the distinguishing marks of a naval dress, and raising his hat at the same moment, with great respect; "my orders were to use the utmost precaution, ma'am, for, as you hear, the rebels sleep but little to-night!"

"'Tis a dreadful scene I leave, truly, sir," returned Cecil, "and the sooner it will suit your convenience to transport us from it, the greater will be the obligation you are about to confer."

The youth once more bowed, in submission to her wishes, and requested the whole party to follow whither he should lead. A very few moments brought them to a pair of waterstairs, where, under cover of the duskiness thrown upon the basin from the wharf, a boat lay concealed, in perfect readiness to receive them.

"Be stirring, boys!" cried the youth, in a tone of authority; "ship your oars as silently as if stealing away from an enemy. Have the goodness, ma'am, to enter, and you shall have a quick and safe landing on the other shore, whatever may be the reception of the rebels."

Cecil and her two attendants complied without delay, when the boat glided into the stream with a velocity that promised a speedy verification of the words of the midshipman. The most profound stillness reigned among these nocturnal adventurers, and by the time they had rowed a short distance, the bride began to lose an immediate consciousness of her situation in contemplation of the scene.

The evening was already milder, and by one of those sudden changes, peculiar to the climate, it was rapidly becoming even bland and pleasant. The light of a clear moon fell upon the town and harbor, rendering the objects of both visible, in mellowed softness. The huge black hulls of the vessels of war rested sullenly on the waters, like slumbering leviathans, without even a sail or a passing boat, except their own, to enliven the view in the direction of the port. On the other hand, the hills of the town rose, in beautiful relief, against the clear sky, with here and there a roof or a steeple reflecting the pale light of the moon. The bosom of the place was as quiet as if its inhabitants were buried in midnight sleep; but behind the hills, in a circuit extending from the works on the heights of Charlestown, to the neck, which lay in open view of the boat, there existed all the evidences of furious warfare. During the few preceding nights, the Americans had been more than commonly diligent in the use of their annoyances, but now they appeared to expend their utmost energies upon their

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enemies. Still they spared the town, directing the weight of their fire at the different batteries which protected the approaches to the place, as already described, along the western borders of the peninsula.

The ears of Cecil had long been accustomed to the uproar of arms, but this was the first occasion in which she was ever a witness of the mingled beauties and terrors of a cannonade at night. Suffering the calash to fall, she shook back the dark tresses from her face, and, leaning over the sides of the little vessel, listened to the bursts of the artillery, and gazed on the sudden flashes of vivid light that mocked the dimmer illumination of the planet, with an absorbed attention that momentarily lured her into forgetfulness. The men pulled their light boat with muffled oars, and so still was its progress, that there were instants when even the shot might be heard rattling among the ruins they had made.

"It's amazement to me, madam," said Meriton, "that so many British generals and brave gentlemen as there is in Boston, should stay in such a little spot to be shot at by a parcel of countrymen, when there is Lonnon, as still and as safe, at this blessed moment, as a parish church-yard at midnight!"

Cecil raised her eyes at this interruption, and perceived the youth gazing at her countenance in undisguised admiration of its beauty. Blushing, and once more concealing her features beneath her calash, she turned away from the view of the conflict, in silence.

"The rebels are free with their gunpowder to-night!" said the midshipman.—"Some of their cruisers have picked up another of our store-ships, I fancy, or Mr. Washington would not make such a noisy time of it, when all honest people should be thinking of their sleep. Don't you believe, ma'am, if the admiral would warp three or four of our heaviest ships up into the channel, back of the town, it would be a short method of lowering the conceit of these Yankees?"

"Really, sir, I am so little acquainted with military matters," returned Cecil, suffering her anxious features to relax into a smile, "that my opinion, should I venture to give one, would be utterly worthless."

"Why, young gentleman," said Meriton, "the rebels drove a galley out of the river, a night or two ago, as I can testify myself, having stood behind a large brick store, where I saw the whole affair, most beautifully conducted!"

"A very fit place for one like you, no doubt, sir," returned the midshipman, without attempting to conceal his disgust at so impertinent an interruption—"do you know what a galley is, ma'am? nothing but a small vessel cut down, with a few heavy guns, I do assure you. It would be a very different affair with a frigate or a two-decker! Do but observe what a charming thing our ship is, ma'am—I am sure so beautiful a lady must know how to admire a handsome ship!—she lies hereaway, nearly in a range with the second island."

To please the earnest youth Cecil bent her head toward the quarter he wished, and murmured a few words in approbation of his taste. But the impatient boy had narrowly watched the direction of her eyes, and she was interrupted by his exclaiming, in manifest disappointment—

"What! that shapeless hulk, just above the castle! she is an old Dutch prize, en flute, ay, older than my grandmother, good old soul; and it wouldn't matter the value of a piece of junk, into which end you stepped her bowsprit! One of my school-fellows, Jack Willoughby, is a reefer on board her; and he says that they can just get six knots out of her, on her course in smooth water with a fresh breeze, allowing seven knots for leeway! Jack means to get rid of her the moment he can catch the admiral running large; for the Graveses live near the Willoughbys in town, and he knows all the soundings about the old man's humor. No, no, ma'am; Jack would give every shot in his lockers to swing a hammock between two of the beams of our ship. Do excuse me, one moment;"—presuming to take one of the hands of Cecil, though with sufficient delicacy, as he pointed out his favorite vessel—"There, ma'am, now you have her! she that's so taut-rigged, with a flying-jib-boom, and all her top-gallant-yards stopped to her lower rigging—we send them down every night at gun-fire, and cross them again next morning as regularly as the bell strike seight.—Isn't she a sweet thing, ma'am? for I see she has caught your eye at last, and I am sure you can't wish to look at any other ship in port."

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Cecil could not refuse her commendations to this eloquent appeal, though at the next moment she would have been utterly at a loss to distinguish the much-admired frigate from the despised store-ship.

"Ay, ay, madam, I knew you would like her when you once got a fair glimpse at her proportions," continued the delighted boy; "though she is not half so beautiful on her broadside, as when you can catch her lasking, especially on her larboard bow.—Pull, long and strong, men, and with a light touch of the water—these Yankees have ears as long as borricoes, and we are getting in with the land. This set-down at Dorchester's neck will give you a long walk, ma'am, to Cambridge, but there was no possibility of touching the rebels anywhere else to-night, or, as you see, we should have gone right into the face of their cannon."

"Is it not a little remarkable," said Cecil, willing to pay the solicitude of the boy to amuse her, by some reply, "that the colonists, while they invest the town so closely on the north and west, should utterly neglect to assail it on the south? for I believe they have never occupied the hills in Dorchester at all; and yet it is one of the points nearest to Boston."

"It is no mystery at all!" returned the boy, shaking his head with all the sagacity of a veteran—"it would bring another Bunker Hill about their ears; for you see it is the same thing at this end of the place that Charlestown neck is at the other!—a light touch, men, a light touch!" he continued, dropping his voice, as they approached the shore;—"besides, ma'am, a fort on that hill could throw its shot directly on our decks, a thing the old man would never submit to; and that would either bring on a regular hammering match, or a general clearing out of the fleet; and then what would become of the army?—No, no—the Yankees wouldn't risk driving the codfish out of their bay, to try such an experiment!—Lay on your oars, boys, while I take a squint along this shore, to see if there are any Jonathans cooling themselves near the beach, by moonlight."

The obedient seamen rested from their labors, while their youthful officer stood up in the boat, and directed a small night-glass over the intended place of landing. The examination proved entirely satisfactory, and in a low, cautious voice, he ordered the men to pull into a place where the shadow of the hills might render the landing still less likely to be observed.

From this moment the most profound silence was observed, the boat advancing swiftly, though under perfect command, to the desired spot, where it was soon heard grazing upon the bottom, as it gradually lost its motion, and finally became stationary. Cecil was instantly assisted to the land, whither she was followed by the midshipman, who jumped upon the shore with great indifference, and approached the passenger, from whom he was now about to part.

"I only hope that those you next fall in with may know how to treat you as well as those you leave," said the boy, approaching, and offering his hand, with the frankness of an older seaman, to Cecil—"God bless you, my dear ma'am; I have two little sisters at home, nearly as handsome as yourself; and I never see a woman in want of assistance, but I think of the poor girls I've left in old England—God bless you, once more—I hope when we meet again, you will take a nearer view of the——"

"You are not likely to part so soon as you imagine," exclaimed a man, springing on his feet, from his place of concealment behind a rock, and advancing rapidly on the party—"offer the least resistance, and you are all dead."

"Shove off, men, shove off, and don't mind me!" cried the youth, with admirable presence of mind—"For God's sake, save the boat, if you die for it!"

The seamen obeyed with practised alacrity, when the boy darted after them with the lightness of his years, and, making a desperate leap, caught the gunwale of the barge, into which he was instantly drawn by the sailors. A dozen armed men had by this time reached the edge of the water, and as many muskets were pointed at the retreating party, when he who had first spoken, cried—

"Not a trigger!—the boy has escaped us, and he deserves his fortune!—Let us secure those who remain, but if a single gun be fired, it will only draw the attention of the fleet and castle."

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His companions, who had acted with the

hesitation of men that were not assured the course they took were correct, willingly dropped the muzzles of their pieces, and in another instant the boat was ploughing its way toward the much-admired frigate, at a distance which would probably have rendered their fire quite harmless. Cecil had hardly breathed during the short period of uncertainty; but when the sudden danger was passed, she prepared herself to receive their captors with the perfect confidence which an American woman seldom fails to feel in the mildness and reason of her countrymen. The whole party, who now approached her, were dressed in the ordinary habiliments of husbandmen, mingled, in a slight degree, with the more martial accoutrements of soldiers. They were armed with muskets only, which they wielded like men acquainted with all the uses of the weapon, at the same time that they were unaccustomed to the mere manual of the troops.

Every fibre of the body of Meriton, however, shook with fear, as he found this unexpected guard encircling their little party, nor did the unknown man who had accompanied them appear entirely free from apprehension. The bride still maintained her self-possession, supported either by her purpose, or her greater familiarity with the character of the people into whose hands she had fallen.

When the whole party were posted within a few feet of them, they dropped the butts of their muskets on the ground, and stood patient listeners to the ensuing examination. The leader of the party, who was only distinguished from his companions by a green cockade in his hat, which Cecil had heard was the symbol of a subaltern officer among the American troops, addressed her in a calm, but steady tone—

"It is unpleasant to question a woman," he said, "and especially one of your appearance; but duty requires it of me. What brings you to this unfrequented point, in the boat of a king's ship, and at this unusual hour of the night?"

"I come with no intent to conceal my visit from any eyes," returned Cecil; "for my first wish is to be conducted to some officer of rank, to whom I will explain my object. There are many that I should know, who will not hesitate to believe my words."

"We none of us profess to doubt your truth; we only act with caution, because it is required by circumstances.—Cannot the explanation be made to me?—for I dislike the duty that causes trouble to a female."

"'Tis impossible!" said Cecil, involuntarily shrinking within the folds of her mantle.

"You came at a most unfortunate moment," said the other, musing; "and I fear you will pass an uneasy night, in consequence. By your tongue, I think you are an American?"

"I was born among those roofs, which you may see on the opposite peninsula."

"Then we are of the same town," returned the officer, stepping back in a vain attempt to get a glimpse of those features which were concealed beneath the hood. He made no attempt, however, to remove the silk; nor did he in the slightest manner convey any wish of a nature that might be supposed to wound the delicacy of her sex; but finding himself unsuccessful, he turned away, as he added—"and I grow tired of remaining where I can see the smoke of my own chimneys, at the same time I know that strangers are seated around the hearths below!"

"None wish more fervently than I, that the moment had arrived when each might enjoy his own, in peace and quietness."

"Let the Parliament repeal their laws, and the king recall his troops," said one of the men, "and there will be an end of the struggle at once. We don't fight because we love to shed blood!"

"He would do both, friend, if the counsel of one so insignificant as I could find weight in his royal mind."

"I believe there is not much difference between a royal mind and that of any other man, when the devil get hold of it!" bluntly exclaimed another of the party. "I've a notion the imp is as mischievous with a king as with a cobbler!"

"Whatever I may think of the conduct of his ministers," said Cecil, coldly, "'tis unpleasant to me to discuss the personal qualities of my sovereign."

"Why, I meant no offence; though when the truth is uppermost in a man's thoughts, he is apt to let it out," returned the soldier. After this uncouth apology, he continued silent, turning away like one who felt dis-

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satisfied with himself for what he had done.

In the meantime the leader had been consulting with one or two of his men aside. He now advanced again, and delivered the result of their united widsom.

"Under all circumstances, I have concluded," he said, speaking in the first person, in deference to his rank, though in fact he had consented to change his own opinion at the instigation of his advisers, "to refer you for information to the nearest general officer, under the care of these two men, who will show you the way. They both know the country, and there is not the least danger of their mistaking the road."

Cecil bowed in entire submission to this characteristic intimation of his pleasure, and declared her anxiety to proceed. The officer held another short consultation with the two guides, which soon terminated by his issuing orders to the rest of the detachment to prepare to depart. Before they separated, one of the guides, or, more properly, guards, approached Meriton, and said, with a deliberation that might easily be mistaken for doubt—

"As we shall be only two to two, friend, will it not be as well to see what you have got secreted about your person, as it may prevent any hard words or difficulties hereafter? You will see the reason of the thing, I trust, and make no objection."

"Not at all, sir, not at all!" returned the trembling valet, producing his purse, without a moment's hesitation; "it is not heavy, but what there is in it is of the best English gold; which I expect is much regarded among you who see nothing but rebel paper!"

"Much as we set store by it, we do not choose to rob for it," returned the soldier, with cool contempt. "I wish to look for weapons, and not for money."

"But, sir, as I unluckily have no weapons, had you not better take my money? there are ten good guineas, I do assure you; and not a light one among them all, 'pon honor! besides several pieces of silver."

"Come, Allen," said the other soldier, laughing, "it's no great matter whether that gentleman has arms or not, I believe. His comrade, here, who seems to know rather better what he is about, has none, at any rate; and for one of two men, I am willing to trust the other."

"I do assure you," said Cecil, "that our intentions are peaceable, and that your charge will prove in no manner difficult."

The men listened to the earnest tones of her sweet voice with much deference, and in a few moments the two parties separated, to proceed on their several ways. While the main body of the soldiers ascended the hill, the guides of Cecil took a direction which led them around its base. Their route lay toward the low neck, which connected the heights with the adjacent country, and their progress was both diligent and rapid. Cecil was often consulted as to her ability to endure the fatigue, and repeated offers were made to accommodate their speed to her wishes. In every other respect she was totally disregarded by the guides, who, however, paid much closer attention to her companions, each soldier attaching himself to one of her followers, whom he constantly regarded with a watchful and wary eye.

"You seem cold, friend," said Allen to Meriton, "though I should call the night quite pleasant for the first week in March!"

"Indeed I'm starved to the bones!" returned the valet, with a shivering that would seem to verify his assertion.—"It's a very chilly climate is this of America, especially of nights! I never really felt such a remarkable dampness about the throat before, within memory, I do assure you."

"Here is another handkerchief," said the soldier, throwing him a common kerchief from his pocket—"wrap it round your neck, for it gives me an ague to hear your teeth knocking one another about so."

"I thank you, sir, a thousand times," said Meriton, producing his purse, again, with an instinctive readiness—"what may be the price?"

The man pricked up his ears, and dropping his musket from the guarded position in which he had hitherto carried it, he drew closer to the side of his prisoner, in a very companionable way, as he replied—

"I did not calculate on selling the article; but if you have need of it, I wouldn't wish to be hard."

"Shall I give you one guinea, or two, Mr.

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Rebel ?" asked Meriton, whose faculties were utterly confounded by his terror.

"My name is Allen, friend, and we like civil language in the Bay," said the soldier. "Two guineas for a pocket-handkerchief ! I couldn't think of imposing on any man so much !"

"What shall it be then, half a guinea, or four half-crown pieces ?"

"I didn't at all calculate to part with the handkerchief when I left home—it's quite new, as you can see by holding it up, in this manner, to the moon—besides, you know, now there is no trade, these things come very high.—Well, if you are disposed to buy, I don't wish to crowd ; you may take it, finally, for the two crowns."

Meriton dropped the money into his hands, without hesitation, and the soldier pocketed the price, perfectly satisfied with his bargain and himself, since he had sold his goods at a clear profit of about three hundred per cent. He soon took occasion to whisper to his comrade, that in his opinion "he had made a good trade;" and laying their heads together, they determined that the bargain was by no means a bad windfall. On the other hand, Meriton, who knew the difference in value between cotton and silk quite as well as his American protectors, was equally well satisfied with the arrangement; though his contentment was derived from a very different manner of reasoning. From early habit, he had long been taught to believe, that every civility, like patriotism in the opinion of Sir Robert Walpole, had its price; and his fears had rendered him somewhat careless about the amount of the purchase-money. He now considered himself as having a clear claim on the protection of his guard, and his apprehensions gradually subsided into security under the soothing impression.

By the time this satisfactory bargain was concluded, and each party was lawfully put in possession of his own, they had reached the low land already mentioned as the "neck." Suddenly the guards stopped, and bending forward, in the attitude of deep attention, they seemed to listen, intently, to some faint and distant sounds, that were, for moments, audible in the intervals of the cannonade.

"They are coming," said one to the other; "shall we go on, or wait until they've passed ?"

The question was answered in a whisper, and, after a short consultation, they determined to proceed.

The attention of Cecil had been attracted by this conference, and the few words which had escaped her guides; and, for the first time, she harbored some little dread as to her final destination. Full of the importance of her errand, the bride now devoted every faculty to detect the least circumstance that might have a tendency to defeat it. She trod so lightly on the faded herbage as to render her own footsteps inaudible, and more than once she was about to request the others to imitate her example, that no danger might approach them unexpectedly. At length her doubts were relieved, though her wonder was increased, by distinctly hearing the lumbering sounds of wheels on the frozen earth, as if innumerable groaning vehicles were advancing with slow and measured progress. In another instant her eyes assisted the organs of hearing, and by the aid of the moon her doubts, if not her apprehensions, were entirely removed.

Her guards now determined on a change of purpose, and withdrew with their prisoners within the shadow of an apple-tree that stood on the low land, but a few paces from the line of the route evidently taken by the approaching vehicles. In this position they remained for several minutes, attentive observers of what was passing around them.

"Our men have woke up the British by their fire," said one of the guards; "and all their eyes are turned to the batteries!"

"Yes, it's very well as it is," returned his comrade; "but if the old brass congress mortar hadn't gi'n way yesterday, there would be a different sort of roaring. Did you ever see the old congress ?"

"I can't say I ever saw the cannon itself, but I have seen the bombs fifty times; and pokerish-looking things they be, especially in a dark night—but hush, here they come."

A large body of men now approached, and moved swiftly past them, in deepest silence, defiling at the foot of the hills, and marching toward the shores of the peninsula. The whole of this party was attired and accoutred much in the fashion of those who had received Cecil. One or two who were mounted, and in more martial trappings, announced

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the presence of some officers of higher rank. At the very heels of this detachment of soldiers, came a great number of carts, which took the route that led directly up to the neighboring heights. After these came another and more numerous body of troops, who followed the teams, the whole moving in the profoundest stillness, and with the diligence of men who were engaged in the most important undertaking. In the rear of the whole, another collection of carts appeared, groaning under the weight of large bundles of hay, and other military preparations of defence. Before this latter division left the low land, immense numbers of the closely-packed bundles were tumbled to the ground, and arranged, with a quickness almost magical, in such a manner as to form a light breastwork across the low ground, which would otherwise have been completely exposed to be swept by the shot of the royal batteries; a situation of things that was believed to have led to the catastrophe of Breed's, the preceding summer.

Among the last of those who crossed the neck, was an officer on horseback, whose eye was attracted by the group who stood as idle spectators under the tree. Pointing out the latter object to those around him, he rode nigher to the party, and learned forward in his saddle to examine their persons—

"How's this?" he exclaimed—"a woman and two men under the charge of sentinels! Have we then more spies among us?—cut away the tree, men; we have need of it, and let in the light of the moon upon them!"

The order was hardly given before it was executed, and the tree fell with a despatch that, to any but an American, would appear incredible. Cecil stepped aside from the impending branches, and by moving into the light, betrayed the appearance of a gentlewoman by her mien and apparel.

"Here must be some mistake!" continued the officer—"why is the lady thus guarded?"

One of the soldiers, in a few words, explained the nature of her arrest, and in return received directions, anew, how to proceed. The mounted officer now put spurs into his horse, and galloped away, in eager pursuit of more pressing duties, though he still looked behind him, so long as the deceptive light enabled him to distinguish either form or features.

"'Tis advisable to go on the heights," said the soldier, "where we may find the commanning general."

"Anywhere," returned Cecil, confused with the activity and bustle that had passed before her eyes, "or anything, to be relieved from this distressing delay."

In a very few moments they reached the summit of the nearest of the two hills, where they paused just without the busy circle of men who labored there, while one of the soldiers went in quest of the officer in command. From the point where she now stood, Cecil had an open view of the port, the town, and most of the adjacent country. The vessels still reposed heavily on the waters. and she fancied that the youthful midshipman was already nestling safe in his own hammock, on board the frigate, whose tall and tapering spars rose against the sky in such beautiful and symmetrical lines. No evidences of alarm were manifested in the town; but, on the contrary, the lights were gradually disappearing, notwithstanding the heavy cannonade which still roared along the western side of the peninsula; and it was probable that Howe, and his unmoved companions, yet continued their revels, with the same security in which they had been left two short hours before. While, with the exception of the batteries, everything in the distance was still, and apparently slumbering, the near view was one of life and activity. Mounds of earth were already rising on the crest of the hill; laborers were filling barrels with earth and sand; fascines were tumbling about from place to place, as they were wanted; and yet the stillness was only interrupted by the unremitting strokes of the pick, the low and earnest hum of voices, or the crashing of branches, as the pride of the neighboring orchards came crushing to the earth. The novelty of the scene beguiled Cecil of her anxiety, and many minutes passed unheeded by. Fifty times parties, or individuals amongst the laborers, approaching near her person, paused to gaze a moment at the sparkling and sweet features that the placid light of the moon rendered even more than usually soft, and then pushed on in silence, endeavoring to repair, by renewed diligence, the

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transient forgetfulness of their urgent duties. At length the men returned, and announced the approach of the general who commanded on the hill. The latter was a soldier of middle age, of calm and collected deportment, roughly attired for the occasion, and bearing no other symbod of his rank than the distinctive crimson cockade, in one of the large military hats of the period.

"You find us in the midst of our labors," he pleasantly observed, as he approached; "and will overlook the delay I have given you. It is reported you left the town this evening?"

"Within the hour."

"And Howe—dreams he of the manner in which we are likely to amuse him in the morning?"

"It would be affectation in one like me," said Cecil, modestly, "to decline answering questions coneerning the views of the royal general; but still you will pardon me if I say, that in my present situation, I could wish to be spared the pain of even confessing my ignorance."

"I acknowledge my error," the officer unhesitatingly answered. After a short pause, in which he seemed to mnse, he continued—"this is no ordinary night, young lady, and it becomes my duty to refer you to the general commanding this wing of the army. He possibly may think it necessary to communicate your detention to the commander-in-chief."

"It is he I seek, sir, and would most wish to meet."

He bowed, and, giving his orders to a subaltern in a low voice, walked away, and was soon lost in the busy crowd that came and went in constant employment, around the summit of the hill. Cecil lingered a single moment after her new conductor had declared his readiness to proceed, to cast another glance at the calm spendor of the sea and bay; the distant and smoky roofs of the town; the dim objects that moved about the adjacent eminence, equally and similarly employed with those around her; and then raising her calash, and tightening the folds of her mantle, she descended the hill with the light and elastic steps of youth.

CHAPTER XXX.

"The rebel vales, the rebel dales,
With rebel trees surrounded,
The distant woods, the hills and floods,
With rebel echoes sounded."
—*The Battle of the Kegs.*

THE enormous white cockade that covered nearly one side of the little hat of her present conductor, was the only symbol that told Cecil she was now committed to the care of one who held the rank of captain, among those who battled for the rights of the colonies. No other part of his attire was military, though a cut-and-thrust was buckled to his form, which, from its silver guard, and formidable dimensions, had probably been borne by some of his ancestors, in the former wars of the colonies. The disposition of its present wearer was, however, far from that belligerent nature that his weapon might be thought to indicate, for he tendered the nicest care and assiduity to the movements of his prisoner.

At the foot of the hill, a wagon, returning from the field, was put in requisition by this semi-military gallant; and, after a little suitable preparation, Cecil found herself seated on a rude bench by his side, in the vehicle; while her own attendants, and the two private men, occupied its bottom in still more social affinity. At first their progress was slow and difficult, return carts, literally by hundreds, impeding the way; but when they had once passed the heavy-footed beasts who drew them, they proceeded in the direction of Roxbury, with greater rapidity. During the first mile, while they were extricating themselves from the apparently interminable line of carts, the officer directed his whole attention to this important and difficult manœuvre; but when their uneasy vessel might be said to be fairly sailing before the wind, he did not choose to neglect those services, which, from time immemorial, beautiful women in distress have had a right to claim of men in his profession.

"Now do not spare the whip," he said to the driver, at the moment of their deliverance; "but push on, for the credit of horseflesh, and to the disgrace of all horned cattle. This near beast of yours should be a tory, by his gait and his reluctance to pull in the traces for the common good—treat him as

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such, friend, and in turn you shall receive the treatment of a sound whig, when we make a halt. You have spent the winter in Boston, madam?"

Cecil bent her head in silent assent.

"The royal army will, doubtless, make a better figure in the eyes of a lady, than the troops of the colonies; though there are some among us who are thought not only wholly wanting in military knowledge, and the certain air of a soldier," he continued; extricating the silver-headed legacy of his grandfather from its concealment under a fold of his companion's mantle—"you have balls and entertainments without number, I fancy' ma'am, from the gentlemen in the king's service."

"I believe that few hearts are to be found amongst the females in Boston so light as to mingle in their amusements!"

"God bless them for it!" exclaimed her escort; "I am sure every shot we throw into town is like drawing blood from our own veins. I suppose the king's officers don't hold the colonists so cheap, since the small affair on Charlestown Neck, as they did formerly?"

"None who had any interest at stake in the events of that fatal day will easily forget the impression it has made!"

The young American was too much struck by the melancholy pathos in the voice of Cecil, not to fancy he had, in his own honest triumph, unwittingly probed a wound which time had not yet healed. They rode many minutes, after this unsuccessful effort on his part to converse, in profound silence; nor did he again speak until the trampling of horses' hoofs was borne along by the evening air, unaccompanied by the lumbering sounds of wheels. At the next turn of the road they met a small cavalcade of officers, riding at a rapid rate in the direction of the place they had so recently quitted. The leader of this party drew up when he saw the wagon, which was also stopped in deference to his obvious wish to speak with them.

There was something in the haughty, and yet easy air of the gentleman who addressed her companion, that induced Cecil to attend to his remarks with more than the interest that is usually excited by the commonplace dialogues of the road. His dress was neither civil, nor wholly military, though his bearing had much of a soldier's manner. As he drew up, three or four dogs fawned upon him, or passed with indulged impunity between the legs of his high-blooded charger, apparently indifferent to the impatient repulses that were freely bestowed on their troublesome familiarities.

"High discipline, by ——!" exclaimed this singular specimen of the colonial chieftains. "I dare presume, gentlemen, you are from the heights of Dorchester; and having walked the whole distance thither from camp, are disposed to try the virtues of a four-wheeled conveyance over the same ground, in a retreat!"

The young man rose in his place, and lifted his hat, with marked respect, as he answered—

"We are returning from the hills, sir, it is true; but we must see our enemy before we retreat!"

"A white cockade! As you hold such rank, sir, I presume you have authority for your movements? Down, Juno—down, slut."

"This lady was landed an hour since on the Point, from the town, by a boat from a king's ship, sir; and I am ordered to see her in safety to the general of the right wing."

"A lady!" repeated the other, with singular emphasis, slowly passing his hand over his remarkably aquiline and prominent features, "if there be a lady in the case, ease must be indulged. Will you down, Juno!" Turning his head a little aside, to his nearest aid, he added, in a voice that was suppressed only by the action—"Some trull of Howe's sent out as the newest specimen of loyal modesty! In such a case, sir, you are quite right to use horses. I only marvel that you did not take six instead of two. But how come we on in the trenches? Down, you hussy, down! Thou shouldst go to court, Juno, and fawn upon his majesty's ministers, where thy sycophancy might purchase thee a riband! How come we on in the trenches?"

"We have broken ground, sir, and as the eyes of the royal troops are drawn upon the batteries, we shall make a work of it before the day shows them our occupation."

"Ah! we are certainly good at digging, if at no other part of our exercises! Miss Juno, thou puttest thy precious life in jeop-

ardy!—you will? then take thy fate!" As he spoke, the impatient chief drew a pistol from his holster, and snapped it twice at the head of the dog that still fawned upon him in unwitting fondness. Angry with himself, his weapon, and the animal at the same moment, he turned to his attendants, and added, with bitter deliberation—"Gentlemen, if one of you will exterminate that quadruped, I promise him an honorable place in my first despatches to Congress, for the service!"

A groom in attendance whistled to the spaniel, and probably saved the life of the disgraced favorite.

The officer now addressed himself to the party he had detained, with a collected and dignified air, that showed he had recovered his self-possession, by saying—

"I beg pardon, sir, for this trouble—let me not prevent you from proceeding; there may be serious work on the heights before morning, and you will doubtless wish to be there." He bowed with perfect ease and politeness, and the two parties were slowly passing each other, when, as if repenting of his condescension, he turned himself in his saddle, adding, with those sarcastic tones so peculiarly his own—"Captain, I beseech thee have an especial care of *the lady!*"

With these words in his mouth, he clapped spurs to his horse, and galloped onward, followed by all his train, at the same impetuous rate.

Cecil had heard each syllable that fell from the lips of both in this short dialogue, and she felt a chill of disappointment gathering about her heart, as it proceeded. When they had parted, drawing a long, tremulous breath. she asked, in tones that betrayed all her feelings—

"And is this Washington?"

"*That!*" exclaimed her companion—"No, no, madam, he is a very different sort of man! That is the great English officer, whom Congress has made a general in our army. He is thought to be as great in the field as he is uncouth in the drawing-room—yes, I will acknowledge that much in his favor, though I never know how to understand him; he is proud—so supercilious—and yet, he is a great friend of liberty!"

Cecil permitted the officer to reconcile the seeming contradictions in the character of his superior, in his own way, feeling perfectly relieved, when she understood it was not the man who could have any influence on her own destiny. The driver now appeared anxious to recover the lost time, and he urged his horses over the ground with increased rapidity. The remainder of their short drive to the vicinity of Roxbury, passed in silence. As the cannonading was still maintained with equal warmth by both parties, it was hazarding too much to place themselves in the line of the enemy's fire. The young man, therefore, after finding a secure spot among the uneven ground of the vicinity, where he might leave his charge in safety, proceeded by himself to the point where he had reason to believe he should find the officer he was ordered to seek. During his short absence, Cecil remained in the wagon, an appalled listener, and a partial spectator of the neighboring contest.

The Americans had burst their only mortar of size, the preceding night; but they applied their cannon with unwearied diligence, not only in the face of the British entrenchments, but on the low land, across the estuary of the Charles; and still farther to the north, in front of the position which their enemies held on the well-known heights of Charlestown. In retaliation for this attack, the batteries along the western side of the town were in a constant blaze of fire, while those of the eastern continued to slumber, in total unconsciousness of the coming danger.

When the officer returned, he reported that his search had been successful, and that he had been commanded to conduct his charge into the presence of the American commander-in-chief. This new arrangement imposed the necessity of driving a few miles farther; and as the youth began to regard his new duty with some impatience, he was in no humor for delay. The route was circuitous and safe; the roads good; and the driver diligent. In consequence, within the hour they passed the river, and Cecil found herself, after so long an absence, once more approaching the ancient provincial seat of learning.

The little village, though in the hands of friends, exhibited the infallible evidences of the presence of an irregular army. The buildings of the University were filled with

troops, and the doors of the different inns were thronged with noisy soldiers, who were assembled for the inseparable purposes of revelry and folly. The officer drove to one of the most private of these haunts of the unthinking and idle, and declared his intentions to deposit his charge under its roof, until he could learn the pleasure of the American leader. Cecil heard his arrangements with little satisfaction; but, yielding to the necessity of the case, when the vehicle had stopped, she alighted, without remonstrance. With her two attendants in her train, and preceded by the officer, she passed through the noisy crowd, uot only without insult, but without molestation. The different declaimers in the throng, and there were many, even lowered their clamorous voices as she approached, the men giving way, in deference for her sex; and she entered the building without hearing but one remark applied to herself, though a low and curious buzz of voices followed her footsteps to its very threshold. That solitary remark was a sudden exclamation, in admiration of the grace of her movements; and, singular as it may seem, her companion thought it necessary to apologize for its rudeness, by whispering that it proceeded from the lips of "one of the southern riflemen; a corps as distinguished for its skill and bravery, as for its want of breeding!"

The inside of this inn presented a very different aspect from its exterior. The decent tradesman who kept it had so far yielded to the emergency of the times, and perhaps, also, to a certain propensity towards gain, as temporarily to adopt the profession he followed; but by a sort of implied compact with the crowd without, while he administered to their appetite for liquor, he preserved most of the privacy of his domestic arrangements. He had, however, been compelled to relinquish one apartment entirely to the service of the public, into which Cecil and her companions were shown, as a matter of course, without the smallest apology for its condition.

There might have been a dozen people in the common room; some of whom were quietly seated before its large fire, among whom were one or two females; some walking, and others distributed on chairs, as accident or inclination had placed them. A slight movement was made at the entrance of Cecil, but it soon subsided; though her rich mantle of fine cloth, and silken calash, did not fail to draw the eyes of the women upon her, with a ruder gaze than she had yet encountered from the other sex during the hazardous adventures of the night. She took an offered seat near the bright and cheerful blaze on the hearth, which imparted all the light the room contained, and disposed herself to wait in patience the return of her conductor, who immediately took his departure for the neighboring quarters of the American chief.

"'Tis an awful time for women bodies to journey in!" said a middle-aged woman near her, who was busily engaged in knitting, though she also bore the marks of a traveller in her dress—"I'm sure if I had thought there'd ha' been such contentions, I would never have crossed the Connecticut; though I have an only child in camp!"

"To a mother, the distress must be great, indeed," said Cecil, "when she hears the report of a contest in which she knows her children are engaged."

"Yes, Royal is engaged as a six-months'-man, and he is partly agreed to stay till the king's troops conclude to give up the town."

"It seems to me," said a grave-looking yeoman, who occupied the opposite corner of the fireplace, "your child has an unfitting name for one who fights against the crown!"

"Ah, he was so called before the king wor his Scottish Boot! and what has once been solemnly named, in holy baptism, is not to be changed with the shift of the times! They were twins, and I called one Prince and the other Royal; for they were born the day his present majesty came to man's estate. That, you know, was before his heart had changed, and when the people of the Bay loved him little less than they did their own flesh and blood."

"Why, Goody," said the yoeman, smiling good-humoredly, and rising to offer her a pinch of his real Scotch, in token of amity, while he made so free with her domestic matters—"you had then an heir to the throne in your own family! The Prince Royal, they say, comes next to the king; and by your own tell, one of them, at least, is a worthy fellow, who is not likely to sell

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his heritage for a mess of pottage! If I understand you, Royal is here in service?"

"He's at this blessed moment in one of the battering-rams in front of Boston Neck," returned the woman; "and the Lord, he knows, 'tis an awful calling, to be beating down the houses of people of the same religion and blood with ourselves! but so it must be, to prevail over the wicked designs of such as would live in pomp and idleness, by the sweat and labor of their fellow-creatures."

The honest yeoman, who was somewhat more familiar with the terms of modern warfare than the woman, smiled at her mistake, while he pursued the conversation with a peculiar gravity, which rendered his humor doubly droll.

'Tis to be hoped the boy will not weary at the weapon before the morning cometh. But why does Prince linger behind at such a moment? Tarries he with his father, on the homestead, in safety, being the younger born?"

"No, no," said the woman, shaking her head, in sorrow, "he dwells, I trust, with our common Father, in heaven! Neither are you right in calling him the home-child. He was my first-born, and a comely youth he grew to be! When the cry that the reg'lars were out at Lexington, to kill and destroy, passed through the country, he shouldered his musket and came down with the people, to know the reason the land was stained with American blood. He was young, and full of ambition to be foremost among them who were willing to fight for their birthrights; and the last I heard of him was in the midst of the king's troops on Breed's. No, no; his body never came off the hill! The neighbors sent me up the clothes he left in camp, and 'tis one of his socks that I'm now footing for his twin-brother."

The woman delivered this simple explanation with perfect calmness; though, as she advanced in the subject, large tears started from her eyes, and, following each other down her cheeks, fell unheeded upon the humble garment of her dead son.

"This is the way our bravest striplings are cut off, fighting with the scum of Europe!" exclaimed the yeoman, with a warmth that showed how powerfully his feelings were touched—"I hope the boy who lives may find occasion to revenge his brother's death."

"God forbid! God forbid!" exclaimed the weeping mother—"revenge is an evil passion; and least of all would I wish a child of mine to go into the field of blood with so foul a breast. God has given us this land to dwell in, and to rear up temples and worshippers of his holy name; and in giving it, he bestowed the right to defend it against all earthly oppression. If 'twas right for Prince to come, 'twas right for Royal to follow!"

"I believe I am reproved in justice," returned the man, looking around at the spectators with an eye that no longer teemed with a hidden meaning—"God bless you, my good woman, and deliver you, with your remaining boy, and all of us, from the scourge which has been inflicted on the country for our sins. I go west, into the mountains, with the sun; and if I can carry any word of comfort from you to the good man at home, it will not be a hill or two that shall hinder it."

"The same thanks to you for the offer, as if you did it, friend; my man would be right glad to see you at his settlement; but I sicken already with the noises and awful sights of warfare, and shall not tarry long after my son comes forth from the battle. I shall go down to Craigie's house in the morning, and look upon the blessed man whom the people have chosen from among themselves as a leader, and hurry back again; for I plainly see that this is not an abiding-place for such as I!"

"You will then have to follow him into the line of danger; for I saw him, within the hour, riding, with all his followers, toward the water-side; and I doubt not that this unusual waste of ammunition is intended for more than we of little wit can guess."

"Of whom speak you?" Cecil involuntarily asked.

"Of whom should he speak, but of Washington?" returned a deep, low voice at her elbow, whose remarkable sounds instantly recalled the tones of the aged messenger of Death, who had appeared at the bed-side of her grandmother. Cecil started from her chair, and recoiled several paces from the person of Ralph, who stood regarding her with a steady and searching look, heedless of

the observation they attracted, as well as of the number and quality of the spectators.

"We are not strangers, young lady," continued the old man; "and if you will excuse me, if I add, that the face of an acquaintance must be grateful to one of your gentle sex, in a place so unsettled and disorderly as this."

"An acquaintance!" repeated the unprotected bride.

"I said an acquaintance; we know each other, surely," returned Ralph, with marked emphasis; "you will believe me when I add, that I have seen the two men in the guard-room, which is at hand."

Cecil cast a furtive glance behind her, and, with some alarm, perceived that she was separated from Meriton and the stranger. Before time was allowed for recollection, the old man approached her with a courtly breeding, that was rendered more striking by the coarseness as well as negligence of his attire.

"This is not a place for the niece of an English peer," he said; "but I have long been at home in this warlike village, and will conduct you to another residence, more suited to your sex and condition."

For an instant Cecil hesitated; but observing the wondering faces about her, and the intense curiosity with which all in the room suspended their several pursuits, to listen to each syllable, she timidly accepted his offered hand, suffering him to lead her, not only from the room, but the house, in profound silence. The door through which they left the building was opposite to that by which she had entered; and when they found themselves in the open air, it was in a different street, and a short distance removed from the crowd of revellers already mentioned.

"I have left two attendants behind me," she said, "without whom 'tis impossible to proceed."

"As they are watched by armed men, you have no choice but to share their confinement, or to submit to the temporary separation," returned the other, calmly. "Should his keepers discover the character of him who led you hither, his fate would be certain!"

"His character!" repeated Cecil, again shrinking from the touch of the old man.

"Surely my words are plain! I said his character. Is he not the deadly, obstinate enemy of liberty? And think you these countrymen of ours so dull as to suffer one like him to go at large in their very camp? —No, no," he muttered with a low, but exulting laugh; "like a fool has he tempted his fate, and like a dog shall he meet it! Let us proceed; the house is but a step from this, and you may summon him to your presence if you will."

Cecil was rather impelled by her companion, than induced to proceed, when, as he had said, they soon stopped before the door of an humble and retired building. An armed man paced along its front, while the lengthened shadow of another sentinel in the rear was every half-minute thrown far into the street, in conformation of the watchfulness that was kept over those who dwelt within.

"Proceed," said Ralph, throwing open the outer door, without hesitation. Cecil complied, but started at encountering another man, trailing a musket, as he paced to and fro in the narrow passage that received her. Between this sentinel and Ralph, there seemed to exist a good understanding, for the latter addressed him with perfect freedom—

"Has no order been yet received from Washington?" he asked.

"None; and I rather conclude, by the delay, that nothing very favorable is to be expected."

The old man muttered to himself, but passed on, and, throwing open another door, said—

"Enter."

Again Cecil complied, the door closing on her at the instant; but before she had time to express either her wonder or her alarm, she was folded in the arms of her husband.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"Is she a Capulet?
O dear account! my life is my foe's debt."—*Romeo.*

"AH! Lincoln! Lincoln!" cried the weeping bride, gently extricating herself from the long embrace of Lionel, "at what a moment did you desert me!"

"And how have I been punished love! a night of frenzy, and a morrow of useless

regrets! How early have I been made to feel the strength of those ties which unite us;—unless, indeed, my own folly may have already severed them forever!"

"Truant! I know you! and shall hereafter weave a web, with woman's art, to keep you in my toils! If you love me, Lionel, as I would fain believe, let all the past be forgotten. I ask—I wish, no explanation. You have been deceived, and that repentant eye assures me of your returning reason. Let us now speak only of yourself. Why do I find you thus guarded, more like a criminal than an officer of the crown?"

"They have, indeed, bestowed especial watchfulness on my safety!"

"How came you in their power? and why do they abuse their advantage?"

"'Tis easily explained. Presuming on the tempestuousness of the night—what a bridal was ours, Cecil!"

"'Twas terrible!" she answered, shuddering; then, with a bright and instant smile, as if sedulous to chase every appearance of distrust or care from her countenance, she continued—"but I have no longer faith in omens, Lincoln! or, if one has been given, is not the awful fulfilment already come? I know not how you value the benediction of a parting soul, Lionel, but to me there is holy consolation in knowing that my dying parent left her blessing on our sudden union!"

Disregarding the hand, which, with gentle earnestness, she had laid upon his shoulder, he walked gloomily away, into a distant corner of the apartment.

"Cecil, I do love you, as you would fain believe," he said, "and I listen readily to your wish to bury the past in oblivion.—But I leave my tale unfinished. You know the night was such that none would choose, uselessly, to brave its fury—I attempted to profit by the storm, and availing myself of a flag, which is regularly granted to the simpleton, Job Pray, I left the town. Impatient—do I say impatient?—borne along rather by a tempest of passions that mocked the feebler elements, we ventured too much—Cecil, I was not alone!"

"I know it—I know it," she said, hurriedly, though speaking barely above her breath—"you ventured too much—"

"And encountered a piquet that would not mistake a royal officer for an impoverished, though privileged idiot. In our anxiety we overlooked—believe me, dearest Cecil, that if you knew all—the scene I had witnessed—the motives which urged—they at least would justify this strange and seeming desertion."

"Did I doubt it, would I forget my condition, my recent loss, and my sex, to follow in the footsteps of one unworthy of my solicitude!" returned the bride, coloring as much with innate modesty, as with the power of her emotions. "Think not I come with girlish weakness, to reproach you with any fancied wrongs! I am your wife, Major Lincoln; and as such would I serve you, at a moment when I know all the tenderness of the tie will most be needed. At the altar, and in the presence of my God, have I acknowledged the sacred duty; and shall I hesitate to discharge it because the eyes of man are on me!"

"I shall go mad!—I shall go mad!" cried Lionel, in ungovernable mental anguish, as he paced the floor, in violent disorder.—"There are moments when I think that the curse, which destroyed the father, has already lighted on the son!"

"Lionel!" said the soft, soothing voice of his companion at his elbow, "is this to render me more happy?—the welcome you bestow on the confiding girl, who has committed her happiness to your keeping? I see you relent, and you will be more just to us both; more dutiful to your God! Now let us speak of your confinement. Surely, you are not suspected of any criminal designs in this rash visit to the camp of the Americans! 'Twere easy to convince their leaders that you are innocent of so base a purpose!"

"'Tis difficult to evade the vigilance of those who struggle for liberty!" returned the low, calm voice of Ralph, who stood before them, unexpectedly. "Major Lincoln has too long listened to the councils of tyrants and slaves, and forgotten the land of his birth. If he would be safe, let him retract the error, while yet he may, with honor."

"Honor!" repeated Lionel, with unconcealed disdain—again pacing the room with swift and uneasy steps, without deigning any other notice of the unwelcome intruder.

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Cecil bowed her head, and, sinking in a chair, concealed her face in her small muff, as if to exclude some horrid and fearful sight from her view.

The momentary silence was broken by the sound of footsteps and of voices in the passage, and at the next instant, the door of the room opening, Meriton was seen on its threshold. His appearance roused Cecil, who, springing on her feet, beckoned him away, with a sort of frenzied earnestness, exclaiming—

"Not here! not here!—for the love of heaven, not here!"

The valet hesitated, but, catching a glimpse of his master, his attachment got the ascendancy of his respect—

"God be praised for this blessed sight, Master Lionel!" he cried—"'tis the happiest hour I have seen since I lost the look at the shores of old England! If 'twas only at Ravenscliffe, or in Soho, I should be the most contented fool in the three kingdoms! Ah, Master Lionel, let us get out of this province, into the country, where there are no rebels; or anything worse than Kings, Lords, and Commons!"

"Enough now; for this time, worthy Meriton, enough!" interrupted Cecil, breathing with difficulty, in her eagerness to be heard. —"Go—return to the inn—the colleges—anywhere—do but go!"

"Don't send a loyal subject, ma'am, again among the rebels, I desire to entreat of you. Such awful blasphemies, sir, as I heard while I was there! They spoke of his sacred majesty just as freely, sir, as if he had been a gentleman like yourself. Joyful was the news of my release!"

"And had it been a guard-room on the opposite shore," said Ralph, "the liberties they used with your earthly monarch would have been as freely taken with the King of kings!"

"You shall remain, then," said Cecil, probably mistaken the look of high disdain which Meriton bestowed on his aged fellow-voyager, for one of a very different meaning—"but not here. You have other apartments, Major Lincoln; let my attendants be received there —you surely would not admit the menials to our interview!"

"Why this sudden terror, love? Here, if not happy, you at least are safe. Go, Meriton, into the adjoining room; if wanted, there is admission through this door of communication."

The valet murmured some half-uttered sentences, of which only the emphatic word "genteel" was audible; while the direction of his discontented eye sufficiently betrayed that Ralph was the subject of his meditations. The old man followed his footsteps, and the door of the passage soon closed on both, leaving Cecil standing, like a beautiful statue, in an attitude of absorbed thought. When the noise of her attendants, as they quietly entered the adjoining room, was heard, she breathed again, with a tremulous sigh, that seemed to raise a weight of apprehension from her heart.

"Fear not for me, Cecil, and least of all for yourself," said Lionel, drawing her to his bosom with fond solicitude—"my headlong rashness, or rather that fatal bane to the happiness of my house, the distempered feeling which you must have often seen and deplored, has indeed led me into a seeming danger. But I have a reason for my conduct, which, avowed, shall lull the suspicions of even our enemies to sleep."

"I have no suspicions—no knowledge of any imperfections—no regrets, Lionel;—nothing but the most ardent wishes for your peace of mind; and, if I might expl.in!—yes, now is a time—Lionel, kind, but truant Lionel——"

Her words were interrupted by Ralph, who appeared again in the room, with that noiseless step, which, in conjunction with his great age and attenuated frame, sometimes gave to his movements and aspects the character of a being superior to the attributes of humanity. On his arm he bore an overcoat and a hat, both of which Cecil recognized, at a glance, as the property of the unknown man who had attended her person throughout all the vicissitudes of that eventful night.

"See!" said Ralph, exhibiting his spoils with a ghastly, yet meaning smile, "to see in how many forms Liberty appears to aid her votaries! Here is the guise in which she will now be courted! Wear them, young man, and be free!"

"Believe him not—listen not," whispered Cecil, while she shrunk from his approach in

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undisguised terror—"nay, do listen, but act with caution!"

"Dost thou delay to receive the blessed boom of freedom, when offered?" demanded Ralph; "wouldst thou remain, and brave the angry justice of the American chief, and make thy wife, of a day, a widow for an age?"

"In what manner am I to profit by this dress?" said Lionel.—"To submit to the degradation of a disguise, success should be certain."

"Turn thy haughty eyes, young man, on the picture of innocence and terror at thy side. For the sake of her whose fate is wrapped in thine, if not for your own, consult thy safety, and fly—another minute may be too late."

"Oh! hesitate not a moment longer, Lincoln," cried Cecil, with a change of purpose as sudden as the impulse was powerful—"fly,—leave me; my sex and station will be——"

"Never," said Lionel, casting the garment from him, in cool disdain.—"Once, when Death was busy, did I abandon thee; but, ere I do it again, his blow must fall on me!"

"I will follow—I will rejoin you."

"You shall not part," said Ralph, once more raising the rejected coat, and lending his aid to envelop the form of Lionel, who stood passive under the united efforts of his bride and her aged assistant. "Remain here," the latter added, when their brief task was ended, "and await the summons to freedom. And thou, sweet flower of innocence and love, follow, and share in the honor of liberating him who has enslaved thee!"

Cecil blushed with virgin shame, at the strength of his expressions, but bowed her head in silent acquiescence to his will. Proceeding to the door, he beckoned her to approach, indicating, by an expressive gesture to Lionel, that he was to remain stationary. When Cecil had complied, and they were in the narrow passage of the building, Ralph, instead of betraying any apprehension of the sentinel who paced its length, fearlessly approached, and addressed him with the confidence of a known friend—

"See!" he said, removing the calash from before the pale features of his companion, "how terror for the fate of her husband has caused the good child to weep! She quits him now, friend, with one of her attendants, while the other tarries to administer to his master's wants. Look at her; is't not a sweet, though morning partner, to smooth the path of a soldier's life!"

The man seemed awkwardly sensible of the unusual charms that Ralph so unceremoniously exhibited to his view; and while he stood in admiring embarrassment, ashamed to gaze, and yet unwilling to retire, Cecil traced the light footsteps of the old man, entering the room occupied by Meriton and the stranger. She was still in the act of veiling her features from the eyes of the sentinel, when Ralph reappeared, attended by a figure muffled in the well-known overcoat. Notwithstanding the flopped hat, and studied concealment of his gait, the keen eyes of the wife penetrated the disguise of her husband; and recollecting, at the same instant the door of communication between the two apartments, the whole artifice was at once revealed. With trembling eagerness she glided past the sentinel, and pressed to the side of Lionel, with a dependence that might have betrayed the deception to one more accustomed to the forms of life than was the honest countryman who had so recently thrown aside the flail to carry a musket.

Ralph allowed the sentinel no time to deliberate; but waving his hand in token of adieu, he led the way into the street, with his accustomed activity. Here they found themselves in the presence of the other soldier, who moved to and fro, along the allotted ground in front of the building, rendering the watchfulness, by which they were environed, doubly embarrassing. Following the example of their aged conductor, Lionel and his trembling companion walked with apparent indifference towards this man, who, as it proved, was better deserving of his trust than his fellow within doors. Dropping his musket across their path, in a manner which announced an intention to inquire into their movements, before he suffered them to proceed, he roughly demanded—

"How's this, old gentleman? you come out of the prisoner's rooms by squads! one, two, three; our English gallant might be among you, and there would still be two left! Come, come, old father, render some account of yourself, and of your command. For, to

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be plain with you, there are those who think you are no better than a spy of Howe's, notwithstanding you are left to run up and down the camp, as you please. In plain Yankee dialect, and that's intelligible English, you have been caught in bad company of late, and there has been hard talk about shutting you up, as well as your comrade!"

"Hear ye that?" said Ralph, calmly smiling, and addressing himself to his companions, instead of the man whose interrogatories he was expected to answer—"think you the hirelings of the crown are thus alert? Would not the slaves be sleeping the moment the eyes of their tyrants are turned on their own lawless pleasures? Thus it is with Liberty! The sacred spirit hallows its meanest votaries, and elevates the private to all the virtues of the proudest captain!"

"Come, come," returned the flattered sentinel, throwing his musket back to his shoulder again, "I believe a man gains nothing by battling you with words! I should have spent a year or two inside yonder colleges to dive at all your meaning. Though I can guess you are more than half right in one thing; for if a poor fellow, who loves his country, and the good cause, finds it so hard to keep his eyes open on post, what must it be to a half-starved devil on sixpence a day! Go along, go along, old father; there is one less of you than went in, and if there was anything wrong, the man in the house should know it!"

As he concluded, the sentinel continued his walk, humming a verse of Yankee-doodle, in excellent favor with himself and all mankind, with the sweeping exception of his country's enemies. To say that this was not the first instance of well-meaning integrity being cajoled by the jargon of liberty, might be an assertion too hazardous; but that it has not been the last, we conscientiously believe, though no immediate example may present itself to quote in support of such heretical credulity.

Ralph appeared, however, perfectly innocent of intending to utter more than the spirit of the times justified; for, when left to his own pleasure, he pursued his way, muttering rapidly to himself, and with an earnestness that attested his sincerity. When they had turned a corner, at a little distance from any pressing danger, he relaxed in his movements, and, suffering his eager companions to approach, he stole to the side of Lionel, and, clenching his hand fiercely, he whispered, in a voice half choked by inward exultation—

"I have him now; he is no longer dangerous! Ay—ay—I have him closely watched by the vigilance of three incorruptible patriots!"

"Of whom speak you?" demanded Lionel—"what is his offence, and where is your captive?"

"A dog! a man in form, but a tiger in heart! Ay! but I have him!" the old man continued, with a hollow laugh, that seemed to heave up from his inmost soul—"a dog; a veritable dog! I have him, and God grant that he may drink of the cup of slavery to its dregs!"

"Old man," said Lionel, firmly, "that I have followed you thus far on no unworthy errand, you best may testify—I have forgotten the oath which, at the altar, I had sworn to, to cherish this sweet and spotless being at my side, at your instigation, aided by the maddening circumstances of a moment; but the delusion has already passed away! Here we part forever, unless your solemn and often-repeated promises are, on the instant, redeemed."

The high exultation, which had so lately rendered the emaciated countenance of Ralph hideously ghastly, disappeared like a passing shadow; and he listened to the words of Lionel with calm and settled attention. But when he would have answered, he was interrupted by Cecil, who uttered, in a voice nearly suppressed by her fears—

"Oh! delay not a moment! Let us proceed anywhere, or anyhow! even now the pursuers may be on our track. I am strong, dearest Lionel, and will follow to the ends of the earth, so you but lead!"

"Lionel Lincoln, I have not deceived thee!" said the old man, solemnly. "Providence has already led us on our way, and a few minutes will bring us to our goal—suffer, then, that gentler trembler to return into the village, and follow!"

"Not an inch!" returned Lionel, pressing Cecil still closer to his side—"here we part, or your promises are fulfilled."

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"Nay, go with him—go," again whispered the being who clung to him in trembling dependence. "This very controversy may prove your ruin—did I not say I would accompany you, Lincoln?"

"Lead on, then," said her husband, motioning Ralph to proceed—"once again will I confide in you; but use the trust with discretion, for my guardian spirit is at hand; and remember, too, thou no longer leadest a lunatic!"

The moon fell upon the wan features of the old man, and exhibited their contented smile, as he silently turned away, and resumed his progress with his wonted rapid and noiseless tread. Their route still lay towards the skirts of the village. While the buildings of the University were yet in the near view, and the loud laugh of the idlers about the inn, with the frequent challenges of the sentinels, were still distinctly audible, their conductor bent his way beneath the walls of a church, that rose in solemn solitude in the deceptive light of the evening. Pointing upward at its somewhat unusual, because regular architecture, Ralph muttered, as he passed—

"Here, at least, God possesses his own, without insult!"

Lionel and Cecil slightly glanced their eyes at the silent walls, and followed into a small enclosure, through a gap in its humble and dilapidated fence. Here the former again paused and spoke—

"I will go no further," he said, unconsciously strengthening the declaration by placing his foot firmly on the frozen earth, in an attitude of resistance—"'tis time to cease thinking of self, and to listen to the weakness of her whom I support!"

"Think not of me, dearest Lincoln——"

Cecil was interrupted by the voice of the old man, who, raising his hat, and baring his gray locks to the mild rays of the planet, answered with tremulous emotion—

"Thy task is already ended! Thou hast reached the spot, where moulder the bones of one who long supported thee. Unthinking boy, that sacrilegious foot treads on thy mother's grave!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

"Oh, age has weary days,
And nights o' sleepless pain!
Thou golden time o' youthful prime,
Why com'st thou not again?"—BURNS.

THE stillness that succeeded this unexpected annunciation was like the cold silence of those who slumbered on every side of them. Lionel recoiled a pace, in horror; then, imitating the action of the old man, he uncovered his head, in pious reverence of the parent, whose form floated dimly in his imagination, like the earliest recollections of infancy, or the imperfect fancies of some dream. When time was given for these sudden emotions to subside, he turned to Ralph, and said—

"And was it here that you would bring me, to listen to the sorrows of my family?"

An expression of piteous anguish crossed the features of the other, as he answered, in a voice which was subdued to softness—

"Even here—here in the presence of thy mother's grave, shalt thou hear the tale!"

"Then let it be here!" said Lionel, whose eye was already kindling with a wild and disordered meaning, that curdled the blood of the anxious Cecil, who watched its expression with a woman's solicitude.—"Here, on this hallowed spot, will I listen, and swear the vengeance that is due, if all thy previous intimations should be just——"

"No, no, no—listen not—tarry not!" said Cecil, clinging to his side in undisguised alarm—"Lincoln, you are not equal to the scene!"

"I am equal to anything, in such a cause."

"Nay, Lionel, you overrate your powers!—Think only of your safety, now; at another and happier moment, you shall know all—yes — I — Cecil — thy bride, thy wife, promise that all shall be revealed——"

"Thou!"

"It is the descendant of the widow of John Lechmere who speaks, and thy ears will not refuse the sounds," said Ralph, with a smile that acted like a taunt on the awakened impulses of the young man.—"Go—thou art fitter for a bridal than a church-yard!"

"I have told you that I am equal to anything," sternly answered Lionel; "here will I sit, on this humble tablet, to hear all that

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you can utter, though the rebel legions encircle me to my death!"

"What! dar'st brave the averted eye of one so dear to thy heart?"

"All, or anything," exclaimed the excited youth, "with so pious an object."

"Bravely answered! and thy reward is nigh—nay, look not on the siren, or thou wilt relent."

"My wife!" said Lionel, extending his hand, kindly, towards the shrinking form of Cecil.

"Thy mother!" interrupted Ralph, pointing with his emaciated hand to the cold residence of the dead.

Lionel sunk on the dilapidated gravestone to which he had just alluded, and gathering his coat about him, he rested an arm upon his knee, while its hand supported his quivering chin, as if he were desperately bent on his gloomy purpose. The old man smiled with his usual ghastly expression, as he witnessed this proof of his success, and he took a similar seat on the opposite side of the grave, which seemed the focus of their common interest. Here he dropped his face between his hands, and appeared to muse, like one who was collecting his thoughts for the coming emergency. During this short and impressive pause, Lionel felt the trembling form of Cecil drawing to his side; and before his aged companion spoke, her unveiled and pallid countenance was once more watching the changes of his own features, in submissive, but anxious attention.

"Thou knowest already, Lionel Lincoln," commenced Ralph, slowly raising his body to an upright attitude, "how, in past ages, thy family sought three colonies, to find religious quiet, and the peace of the just. And thou also knowest,—for often did we beguile the long watches of the night in discoursing of these things, while the never-tiring ocean was rolling its waters unheeded around,—how Death came into its elder branch, which still dwelt amid the luxury and corruption of the English court, and left thy father the heir of all its riches and honors."

"How much of this is unknown to the meanest gossip in the province of Massachusetts Bay?" interrupted the impatient Lionel.

"But they do not know, that, for years before this accumulation of fortune actually occured, it was deemed to be inevitable by the decrees of Providence; they do not know how much more value the orphan son of the unprovided soldier found in the eyes of those even of his own blood, by the expectation; nor do they know how the worldly-minded Priscilla Lechmere, thy father's aunt, would have compassed heaven and earth, to have seen that wealth, and those honors, to which it was her greatest boast to claim alliance, descend in the line of her own body.'

"But 'twas impossible! She was of the female branch; neither had she a son!"

"Nothing seems impossible to those on whose peace of mind the worm of ambition feeds—thou knowest well she left a grandchild; had not that child a mother?"

Lionel felt a painful conviction of the connection, as the trembling object of these remarks sunk her head in shame and sorrow on his bosom, keenly alive to the justice of the character drawn of her deceased relative, by the mysterious being who had just spoken.

"God forbid, that I, a Christian, and a gentleman," continued the old man, a little proudly, "should utter a syllable to taint the spotless name of one so free from blemish as she of whom I speak. The sweet child who clings to thee, in dread, Lionel, was not more pure and inoocent than she who bore her. And long before ambition had wove its toils for the miserable Priscilla, the heart of her daughter was the property of the gallant and honorable Englishman, to whom in later years she was wedded."

As Cecil heard this soothing commendation of her more immediate parents, she again raised her face into the light of the moon, and remained, where she was already kneeling, at the side of Lionel, no longer an uneasy, but a deepiy interested listener to what followed.

"As the wishes of my unhappy aunt were not realized," said Major Lincoln, "in what manner could they affect the fortunes of my father?"

"Thou shalt hear. In the same dwelling lived another, even fairer, and, to the eye, as pure as the daughter of Priscilla. She was the relative, the god-child, and the ward

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of that miserable woman. The beauty, and seeming virtues of this apparent angel in human form, caught the young eye of thy father, and, in defiance of arts and schemes, before the long-expected title and fortune came, they were wedded, and thou wert born, Lionel, to render the boon of Fate doubly welcome."

"And then——"

"And then thy father hastened to the land of his ancestors to claim his own, and to prepare the way for the reception of yourself, and his beloved Priscilla—for then there were two Priscillas; and now both sleep with the dead! All having life and nature can claim the quiet of the grave, but I," continued the old man, glancing his hollow eye upward, with a look of hopeless misery—"I, who have seen ages pass since the blood of youth has been chilled, and generation after generation swept away, must still linger in the haunts of men! but 'tis to aid in the great work which commences here, but which shall not end until a continent be regenerate."

Lionel suffered a minute to pass without a question, in deference to this burst of feeling; but soon, making an impatient movement, it drew the eyes of Ralph once more upon him, and the old man continued—

"Month after month, for two long and tedious years, did thy father linger in England, struggling for his own. At length he prevailed. He then hastened thither; but there was no wife—no fond and loving Priscilla, like that tender flower that reposes in thy bosom, to welcome his return."

"I know it," said Lionel, nearly choked by his pious recollections—"she was dead."

"She was more," returned Ralph, in a voice so deep, that it sounded like one speaking from the grave—"she was dishonored!"

"'Tis false!"

"'Tis true; true as that holy gospel which comes to men through the inspired ministers of God!"

"'Tis false," repeated Lionel fiercely—blacker than the darkest thoughts of the foul spirit of evil!"

"I say, rash boy, 'tis true! She died in giving birth to the fruits of her infamy. When Priscilla Lechmere met thy heart-stricken parent with the damning tale, he read in her exulting eye the treason of her mind, and, like thee, he dared to call heaven to witness, that thy mother was defamed. But there was one known to him, under circumstances that forbade the thoughts of deceit, who swore—ay, took the blessed name of Him who reads all hearts, for warranty of her truth!—and she confirmed it."

"The infamous seducer!" said Lionel, hoarsely, his body turning unconsciously away from Cecil—"does he yet live? Give him to my vengeance, old man, and I will yet bless you for your accursed history!"

"Lionel, Lionel," said the soothing voice of his bride, "do you credit him?"

"Credit him!" said Ralph, with a horrid inward laugh, "as if he would deride the idea of incredulity; "all this must he believe, and more! Once again, weak girl, did thy grandmother throw out her lures for the wealthy baronet, and when he would not become her son, then did she league with the spirits of hell to compass his ruin. Revenge took place of ambition, and thy husband's father was the victim!"

"Say on!" cried Lionel, nearly ceasing to breathe in the intensity of his interest.

"The blow had cut him to the heart; and for a time, his reason was crushed beneath its weight. Yet 'twas but for an hour, compared to the eternity a man is doomed to live! They profited by the temporary derangement, and when his wandering faculties were lulled to quiet, he found himself the tenant of a mad-house, where for twenty long years, was he herded with the defaced images of his Maker, by the arts of the base widow of John Lechmere."

"Can this be true! Can this be true!" cried Lionel, clasping his hands wildly, and springing to his feet, with a violence that cast the tender form that still clung to him, aside, like a worthless toy—"Can this be proved? How knowest thou these facts?"

The calm, but melancholy smile that was wont to light the wan features of the old man, when he alluded to his own existence, was once more visible, as he answered—

"There is but little hid from the knowledge acquired by length of days; besides, have I not secret means of intelligence that are unknown to thee? Remember what, in our frequent interviews, I have revealed; re-

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call the death-bed scene of Priscilla Lechmore, and ask thyself if there be not truth in thy aged friend?"

"Give me all! hold not back a tittle of thy accursed tale—give me all—or take back each syllable thou hast uttered."

"Thou shalt have all thou askest, Lionel Lincoln, and more," returned Ralph—throwing into his manner and voice its utmost powers of solemnity and persuasion—"provided thou wilt swear eternal hatred to that country and those laws, by which an innocent and unoffending man can be levelled with the beasts of the field, and be made to rave even at his Maker, in the bitterness of his sufferings.''

"More than that—ten thousand times more than that, will I swear—I will league with this rebellion——"

"Lionel, Lionel—what is't you do?" interrupted the heart-stricken Cecil.

But her voice was stilled by loud and busy cries, which broke out of the village, above the hum of revelry, and were instantly succeeded by the trampling of footsteps, as men rushed over the frozen ground, apparently by hundreds, and with headlong rapidity. Ralph, who was not less quick to hear these sounds than the timid bride, glided from the grave, and approached the high-way, whither he was slowly followed by his companions; Lionel, utterly indifferent whither he proceeded, and Cecil trembling in every limb with terror for the safety of him who so little regarded his own danger.

"They are abroad, and think to find an enemy," said the old man, raising his hand with a gesture to command attention; "but he has sworn to join their standards, and gladly will they receive any of his name and family!"

"No, no—he has pledged himself to no dishonor," cried Cecil.—"Fly, Lincoln, while you are free, and leave me to meet the pursuers—they will respect my weakness."

Fortunately, the allusion to herself awakened Lionel from the dull forgetfulness into which his faculties had fallen. Encircling her slight figure with his arm, he turned swiftly from the spot, saying, as he urged her forward—

"Old man, when this precious charge is in safety, thy truth or falsehood shall be proved."

But Ralph, whose unencumbered person and iron frame, which seemed to mock the ravages of time, gave a vast superiority over the impeded progress of the other, moved swiftly ahead, waving his hand on high, as if to indicate his intention to join in the flight, while he led the way into the fields adjacent to the church-yard they had quitted.

The noise of the pursuers soon became more distinct, and, in the intervals of the distant cannonade, the cries and directions of those who conducted the chase were distinctly audible. Notwithstanding the vigorous arm of her supporter, Cecil was soon sensible that her delicate frame was unequal to continue the exertions necessary to ensure their safety. They had entered another road, which lay at no great distance from the first, when she paused, and reluctantly declared her inability to proceed.

"Then, here will we await our captors," said Lionel, with forced composure—"let the rebels beware how they abuse their slight advantage!"

The words were scarcely uttered, when a cart, drawn by a double-team, turned an angle in the highway, near them, and its driver appeared within a few feet of the spot where they stood. He was a man far advanced in years, but still wielded his long goad with a dexterity, which had been imparted by the practice of more than half a century. The sight of this man, alone, and removed from immediate aid, suggested a desperate thought of self-preservation to Lionel. Quitting the side of his exhausted companion, he advanced upon him with an air so fierce, that it might have created alarm in one who had the smallest reason to apprehend any danger.

"Whither go you with that cart?" sternly demanded the young man, on the instant.

"To the Point," was the ready answer. "Yes, yes—old and young—big and little—men and cre'turs—four-wheels and two-wheels—everything goes to the Point to-night, as you can guess, fri'nd! Why," he continued, dropping one end of his goad on the ground, and supporting himself by grasping it with both his hands—"I was eighty-three the fourteenth of the last March, and I hope, God willing, that when the next birthday comes, there won't be a red-coat left

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in the town of Boston. To my notion, fri'nd, they have held the place long enough, and it's time to quit. My boys are in the camp, soldiering a turn—the old woman has been as busy as a bee, sin' sun-down, helping me to load up what you see, and I am carrying it over to Dorchester, and not a farthing shall it ever cost the congress!"

"And you are going to Dorchester Neck with your bundles of hay!" said Lionel, eyeing both him and his passing team, in hesitation whether to attempt violence on one so infirm and helpless.

"Anan! you must speak up, soldier-fashion, as you did at first, for I am a little deaf," returned the carter. "Yes, yes, they spared me in the press, for they said I had done enough; but I say a man has never done enough for his own country, when anything is left to be done. I'm told they are carrying over fashines, as they call 'em, and pressed-hay, for their forts.—As hay is more in my fashion than any other fashion, I've bundled up a stout pile on't here; and if that won't do, why, let Washington come; he is welcome to the barn, stacks and all!"

"While you are so liberal to the congress, can you help a female in distress, who would wish to go in the direction of your route, but is too feeble to walk?"

"With all my heart," said the other, turning round in quest of her whom he was desired to assist—"I hope she is handy; for the night wears on, and I shouldn't like to have the English send a bullet at our people on Dorchester hills, before my hay gets there to help stop it."

"She shall not detain you an instant," said Lionel, springing to the place where Cecil stood, partly concealed by the fence, and supporting her to the side of the rude vehicle—"you shall be amply rewarded for this service."

"Rewarded! Perhaps she is the wife or daughter of a soldier, in which case she should be drawn in her coach-and-four, instead of a cart and double team."

"Yes, yes—you are right, she is both—the wife of one, and the daughter of another soldier."

"Ay! God bless her! I warrant me old Put was more than half right, when he said the women would stop the two ridgements, that the proud parliamenter boasted could march through the colonies, from Hampshire to Georgi'. Well, fri'nds, are ye situated?"

"Perfectly," said Lionel, who had been preparing seats for himself and Cecil among the bundles of hay, and assisting his companion into her place during the dialogue—"we will detain you no longer."

The carter, who was no less than the owner of a hundred acres of good land in the vicinity, signified his readiness; and sweeping through the air with his goad, he brought his cattle to the proper direction, and slowly moved on. During this hurried scene, Ralph had continued hid by the shadows of the fence. When the cart proceeded, he waved his hand, and gliding across the road, was soon lost to the eye in the misty distance, with which his gray apparel blended, like a spectre vanishing in air.

In the meantime the pursuers had not been idle. Voices were heard in different directions and dim forms were to be seen rushing through the fields, by the aid of the deceptive light of the moon. To add to the embarrassment of their situation, Lionel found, when too late, that the route to Dorchester lay directly through the village of Cambridge. When he perceived they were approaching the streets, he would have left the cart, had not the experiment been too dangerous, in the midst of the disturbed soldiery, who now flew by on every side of them. In such a strait, his safest course was to continue motionless and silent, secreting his own form and that of Cecil, as much as possible, among the bundles of hay. Contrary to all the just expectations, which the impatient patriotism of of the old yeoman had excited, instead of driving steadily through the place, he turned his cattle a little from the direct route, and stopped in front of the very inn, where Cecil had so lately been conducted by her guide from the Point.

Here the same noisy and thoughtless revelry existed as before. The arrival of such an equipage at once drew a crowd to the spot, and the uneasy pair on the top of the load became unwilling listeners to the conversation.

"What, old one, hard at it for Congress!" cried a man, approaching with a mug in his hand; "come, wet your throat, my venerable father of Liberty, for you are too old to be a son!"

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"Yes, yes," answered the exulting farmer, "I am father and son, too! I have four boys in camp, and seven grand'uns, in the bargain; and that would be eleven good triggers in one family, if five good muskets had so many locks—but the youngest men have got a ducking-gun, and a double-barrel atween them, howsomever; and Aaron, the boy, carries as good a horse-pistol, I calculate, as any there is going in the Bay! But what an uneasy time you have on't to-night! There's more powder wasted mocking thunder than would fight old Bunker over again, at 'white o' the eye' distance!"

"'Tis the way of war, old man; and we want to keep the reg'lars from looking at Dorchester."

"If they did, they couldn't see far to-night. But, now, do tell me; I am an old man, and have a grain of cur'osity in the flesh; my woman says that Howe casts out his carcasses at you; which I hold to be an irreligious deception."

"As true as the gospel."

"Well, there is no calculating on the wastefulness of an ungodly spirit!" said the worthy yeoman, shaking his head—"I could believe any wickedness of him but that! As cre'turs must be getting scarce in the town, I conclude he makes use of his own slain!"

"Certain," answered the soldier, winking at his companions—"Breed's Hill has kept him in ammunition all winter."

"'Tis awful, awful! to see a fellow-cre'tur flying through the air, after the spirit has departed to judgment! War is a dreadful calling; but, then, what is a man without liberty!"

"Hark ye, old gentleman, talking of flying, have you seen anything of two men and a woman, flying up the road as you came in?"

"Anan! I'm a little hard o' hearing—women, too! do they shoot their Jezebels into our camp? There is no wickedness the king's ministers won't attempt to circumvent our weak naturs!"

"Did you see two men and a woman, running away as you came down the road?" bawled the fellow in his ear.

"Two! did you say two?" asked the yeoman, turning his head a little on one side, in an attitude of sagacious musing.

"Yes, two men."

"No, I didn't see two. Running out of town, did you say?"

"Ay, running, as if the devil was after them."

"No; I didn't see two; nor anybody running away—it's a sartain sign of guilt to run away—is there any reward offered?" said the old man, suddenly interrupting himself, and again communing with his own thoughts.

"Not yet—they've just escaped."

"The surest way to catch a thief is to offer a smart reward—no—I didn't see two men—you are sartain there was two?"

"Push on with that cart! drive on, drive on," cried a mounted officer of the quartermaster's department, who came scouring through the street, at that moment, awakening all the slumbering ideas of haste, which the old farmer had suffered to lie dormant so long. Once more flourishing his goad, he put his team in motion, wishing the revellers good-night as he proceeded. It was, however, long after he left the village, and crossed the Charles, before he ceased to make frequent and sudden halts in the highway, as if doubtful whether to continue his route, or to return. At length he stopped the cart, and clambering up on the hay, he took a seat, where with one eye he could regulate his cattle, and with the other examine his companions. This investigation continued another hour, neither party uttering a syllable, when the teamster appeared satisfied that his suspicions were unjust, and abandoned them. Perhaps the difficulties of the road assisted in dissipating his doubts; for, as they proceeded, return carts were met, at every few rods, rendering his undivided attention to his own team indispensable.

Lionel, whose gloomy thoughts had been chased from his mind by the constant excitement of the foregoing scenes, now felt relieved from any immediate apprehensions. He whispered his soothing hopes of a final escape to Cecil, and folding her in his coat, to shield her from the night-air, he was pleased to find, ere long, by her gentle breathing, that, overcome by fatigue, she was slumbering in forgetfulness on his bosom.

Midnight had long passed when they came in sight of the eminences beyond Dorchester Neck. Cecil had awoke, and Lionel was already devising some plausible excuse for

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quitting the cart, without reviving the suspicions of the teamster. At length a favorable spot occurred, where they were alone, and the formation of the ground was adapted to such a purpose. Lionel was on the point of speaking, when the cattle stopped, and Ralph suddenly appeared in the highway, at their heads.

"Make room, fri'nd, for the oxen," said the farmer—"dumb beasts won't pass in the face of man."

"Alight," said Ralph, seconding his words with a wide sweep of his arm toward the fields.

Lionel quickly obeyed, and by the time the driver had descended also, the whole party stood together in the road.

"You have conferred a greater obligation than you are aware of," said Lionel to the driver. "Here are five guineas."

"For what? for riding on a load of hay a few miles?—no, no—kindness is no such boughten article in the Bay, that a man need pay for it! But, fri'nd, money seems plenty with you, for these difficult days!"

"Then thanks, a thousand times—I can stay to offer you no more."

He was yet speaking, when, obedient to an impatient gesture from Ralph, he lifted Cecil over the fence, and in a moment they disappeared from the eyes of the astonished farmer.

"Halloo, fri'nd!" cried the worthy advocate for his country, running after them as fast as old age would allow—"were there three of you, when I took ye up?"

The fugitives heard the call of the simple and garrulous old man, but, as will easily be imagined, did not deem it prudent to stop and discuss the point in question between them. Before they had gone far, the furious cry of "Take care of that team!" with the rattling of wheels, announced that their pursuer was recalled to his duty, by an arrival of empty wagons; and, before the distance rendered sounds unintelligible, they heard the noisy explanation, which their late companion was giving to the others, of the whole transaction. They were not, however, pursued; the teamsters having more pressing objects in view than the detection of thieves, or even of pocketing a reward.

Ralph led his companions, after a brief explanation, by a long and circuitous path, to the shores of the bay. Here they found, hid in the rushes of a shallow inlet, a small boat, that Lionel recognized as the little vessel in which Job Pray was wont to pursue his usual avocation of a fisherman. Entering it without delay, he seized the oars, and, aided by a flowing tide, he industriously urged it toward the distant spires of Boston.

The parting shades of the night were yet struggling with the advance of day, when a powerful flash of light illuminated the hazy horizon, and the roar of cannon, which had ceased toward morning, was again heard. But this time the sounds came from the water, and a cloud rose above the smoking harbor, announcing that the ships were again enlisted in the contest. This sudden cannonade induced Lionel to steer his boat between the islands; for the castle and southern batteries of the town were all soon united in pouring out their vengeance on the laborers, who still occupied the heights of Dorchester. As the little vessel glided by a tall frigate, Cecil saw the boy, who had been her first escort in the wanderings of the preceding night, standing on its taffrail, rubbing his eyes with wonder, and staring at those hills, whose possession he had prophesied would lead to such bloody results. In short, while he labored at the oars, Lionel witnessed the opening scene of Breed's acted anew, as battery after battery, and ship after ship, brought their guns to bear on the hardy countrymen, who had once more hastened a crisis by their daring enterprise. Their boat passed unheeded, in the excitement and bustle of the moment, and the mists of the morning had not yet dissipated, when it shot by the wharves of Boston, and, turning into the narrow entrance of the town-dock, it touched the land, near the warehouse, where it had so often been moored, in more peaceable times, by its simple master.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"Now cracks a noble heart;—good-night,
Sweet prince."—SHAKESPEARE.

LIONEL assisted Cecil to ascend the difficult water-stairs, and, still attended by their aged companion, they soon stood on the draw-

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bridge that connected the piers which formed the mouth of the narrow basin.

"Here we again part," he said, addressing himself to Ralph; "at another opportunity let us resume your melancholy tale."

"None so fitting as the present: the time, the place, and the state of the town, are all favorable."

Lionel cast his eyes around on the dull misery which pervaded the neglected area. A few half-dressed soldiers and alarmed townsmen were seen, by the gray light of the morning, rushing across the square towards the point whence the sounds of cannon proceeded. In the hurry of the moment, their own arrival was not noted.

"The place—the time?" he slowly repeated.

"Ay, both. At what moment can the friend of liberty pass more unheeded amongst these miscreant hirelings than now, when fear has broken their slumbers? Yon is the place," he said, pointing to the warehouse, "where all that I have uttered will find its confirmation."

Major Lincoln communed momentarily with his thoughts. It is probable, that, in the rapid glances of his mind, he traced the mysterious connection between the abject tenant of the adjacent building, and the deceased grandmother of his bride, whose active agency in producing the calamities of his family had now been openly acknowledged. It was soon apparent, that he wavered in his purpose; nor was he slow to declare it.

"I will attend you," he said; "for who can say what the hardihood of the rebels may next attempt? and future occasions may be wanting. I will first see this gentle charge of mine——"

"Lincoln, I cannot—must not leave you," interrupted Cecil, with earnest fervor—"go, listen, and learn all; surely there can be nothing that a wife may not know!"

Without waiting for further objection, Ralph made a hurried gesture of compliance, and, turning, he led the way, with his usual swift footsteps, into the low and dark tenement of Abigail Pray. The commotion of the town had not yet reached the despised and neglected building, which was even more than ordinarily gloomy and still. As they picked their way, however, among the scattered hemp, across the scene of the preceding night's riot, a few stifled groans proceeded from one of the towers, and directed them where to seek its abused and suffering inmates. On opening the door of this little apartment, not only Lionel and Cecil paused, but even the immovable old man appeared to hesitate, in wonder.

The heart-stricken mother of the simpleton was seated on her humble stool, busied in repairing some mean and worthless garments which had, seemingly, been exposed to the wasteful carelessness of her reckless child. But while her fingers performed their functions with mechanical skill, her contracted brow, working muscles, and hard, dry eyes, betrayed the force of the mental suffering that she struggled to conceal. Job still lay stretched on his abject pallet, though his breathing was louder and more labored than when we last left him, while his sunken features indicated the slow, but encroaching advances of the disease. Polwarth was seated at his side, holding a pulse, with an air of medical deliberation; and attempting, every few moments, to confirm his hopes or fears, as each preponderated in turn, by examining the glazed eyes of the subject of his care.

Upon a party thus occupied, and with feelings so much engrossed, even the sudden entrance of the intruders was not likely to make any very sensible impression. The languid and unmeaning look of Job wandered momentarily towards the door, and then became again fixed on vacancy. A gleam of joy shot into the honest visage of the captain, when he first beheld Lionel, accompanied by Cecil, but it was instantly chased away by the settled meaning of care, which had gotten the mastery of his usually contented expression. The greatest alteration was produced in the aspect of the woman, who bowed her head to her bosom, with a universal shudder of her frame, as Ralph stood unexpectedly before her. But from her, also, the sudden emotion passed speedily away, her hands resuming their humble occupation, with the same mechanical and involuntary movements, as before.

"Explain this scene of silent sorrow!" said Lionel to his friend—"how came you in this haunt of wretchedness? and who has harmed the lad?"

"Your question conveys its own answer,

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Major Lincoln," returned Polwarth, with a manner so deliberate, that he refused to raise his steady look from the face of the sufferer —"I am here, because they are wretched!"

"The motive is commendable! but what aileth the youth?"

"The functions of nature seem suspended by some remarkable calamity! I found him suffering from inanition, and notwithstanding I applied as hearty and nutritious a meal as the strongest man in the garrison could require, the symptoms, as you see, are strangely threatening!"

"He has taken the contagion of the town, and you have fed him, when his fever was at the highest!"

"Is small-pox to be considered more than a symptom, when a man has the damnable disease of starvation? go to—go to, Leo; you read the Latin poets so much at the schools, that no leisure is left to bestow on the philosophy of nature. There is an inward monitor, that teaches every child the remedy for hunger."

Lionel felt no disposition to contend with his friend on a point where the other's opinions were so dogmatical, but, turning to the woman, he said—

"The experience of a professional nurse should have taught you, at least, more care."

"Can experience steel a mother to the yearnings of her offspring for food?" returned the forlorn Abigail—"no, no—the ear cannot be deaf to such a moaning, and wisdom is as folly when the heart bleeds."

"Lincoln, you chide unkindly," said Cecil —"let us rather attempt to avert the danger, than quarrel with its cause."

"It is too late—it is too late," returned the disconsolate mother; "his hours are already numbered, and death is on him. I can now only pray that God will lighten his curse and suffer the parting spirit to know his Almighty power."

"Throw aside these worthless rags," said Cecil, gently attempting to take the clothes, "nor fatigue yourself longer, at such a sacred moment, with unnecessary labor."

"Young lady, you little know a mother's longings; may you never know her sorrows! I have been doing for the child these seven-and-twenty years; rob me not of the pleasure, now that so little remains to be done."

"Is he then so old?" exclaimed Lionel, in surprise.

"Old as he is, 'tis young for a child to die! He wants the look of reason; heaven in its mercy grant that he may be found to have a face of innocence!"

Hitherto Ralph had remained where he first stood, as if riveted to the floor, with his eyes fastened on the countenance of the sufferer. He now turned to Lionel, and, in a voice rendered even plaintive by his deep emotion, he asked the simple question—

"Will he die?"

"I fear it—that look is not easily to be mistaken."

With a step so light that it was inaudible, the old man moved to the bed, and seated himself on the side opposite to Polwarth. Without regarding the wondering look of the captain, he waved his hand on high, as if to exhort to silence, and then, gazing on the features of the sick, with melancholy interest, he said—

"Here, then, is death again! None are so young as to be unheeded; 'tis only the old that cannot die. Tell me, Job, what seest thou in the visions of thy mind—the unknown places of the damned, or the brightness of such as stand in the presence of their God?"

At the well-known sound of his voice, the glazed eye of the simpleton lighted with a ray of reason, and was turned toward the speaker, once more, teeming with a look of meek assurance. The rattling in his throat, for a moment, increased, and then ceased entirely; when a voice so deep, that it appeared to issue from the depths of his chest, was heard saying—

"The Lord won't harm him who never harm'd the creatures of the Lord!"

"Emperors and kings, yea, the great of the earth, might envy thee thy lot, thou unknown child of wretchedness!" returned Ralph. "Not yet thirty years of probation, and already thou throwest aside the clay! Like thee did I grow to manhood, and learn how hard it is to live; but like thee I cannot die! Tell me, boy, dost thou enjoy the freedom of the spirit, or hast thou still pain and pleasure in the flesh? Dost see beyond the tomb, and trace thy route through the pathless air, or is all yet hid in the darkness of the grave?"

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"Job is going where the Lord has hid his reason," answered the same hollow voice as before; "his prayers won't be foolish any longer."

"Pray, then, for one aged and forlorn; who has borne the burden of life till Death has forgotten him, and who wearies of the things of earth, where all is treachery and sin. But stay; depart not till thy spirit can bear the signs of repentance from yon sinful woman into the regions of day."

Abigail groaned aloud; her hands again refused their occupation, and her head once more sunk on her bosom in abject misery. From this posture of self-abasement and grief, the woman raised herself to her feet, and, putting aside the careless tresses of dark hair, which, though here and there streaked with gray, retained much of their youthful gloss, she looked about her with a face so haggard, and eyes so full of meaning, that common attention was instantly attracted to her movements.

"The time has come, and neither fear nor shame shall longer tie my tongue," she said. "The hand of Providence is too manifest in this assemblage around the death-bed of that boy, to be unheeded. Major Lincoln, in that stricken and helpless child, you see one who shares your blood, though he has ever been a stranger to your happiness. Job is your brother!"

"Grief has maddened her!" exclaimed the anxious Cecil—"she knows not what she utters."

"'Tis true!" said the calm tones of Ralph.

"Listen," continued Abigail; "a terrible witness, sent hither by heaven, speaks to attest I tell no lie. The secret of my transgression is known to him, when I had thought it buried in the affection of one only who owed me everything."

"Woman!" said Lionel, "in attempting to deceive me, you deceive yourself. Though a voice from heaven should declare the truth of thy damnable tale, still would I deny that foul object being the child of my beauteous mother."

"Foul and wretched as you see him, he is the offspring of one not less fair, though far less fortunate, than thy own boasted parent, proud child of prosperity! Call on heaven as thou wilt, with that blasphemous tongue, he is no less thy brother, and the elder born."

"'Tis true—'tis true—'tis most solemnly a truth!" repeated the unmoved and aged stranger.

"It cannot be!" cried Cecil—"Lincoln, credit them not; they contradict themselves."

"Out of thy own mouth will I find reasons to convince you," said Abigail. "Hast thou not owned the influence of the son at the altar? Why should one, vain, ignorant, and young as I was, be insensible to the seductions of the father?"

"The child is, then, thine!" exclaimed Lionel, once more breathing with freedom—"proceed with thy tale; you confine it to friends!"

"Yes—yes," cried Abigail, clasping her hands, and speaking with bitter emphasis; "you have all the consolation of proving the difference between the guilt of woman and that of man! Major Lincoln, accursed and polluted as you see me, thy own mother was not more innocent nor fair, when my youthful beauty caught thy father's eye. He was great and powerful, and I unknown and frail—yon miserable proof of our transgression did not appear, until he had met your happier mother!"

"Can this be so?"

"The holy Gospels are not more true!" murmured Ralph.

"And my father! did he—could he desert thee in thy need?"

"Shame came when virtue and pride had been long forgotten. I was a dependent of his own proud race, and opportunities were not wanting to mark his wandering looks and growing love for the chaste Priscilla. He never knew my state. While I was stricken to the earth by the fruits of guilt, he proved how easy it is for us to forget, in the days of prosperity, the companions of our shame. At length you were born; and, unknown to him, I received his new-born heir from the hands of his jealous aunt. What accursed thoughts beset me at that bitter moment! But, praised be God in heaven, they passed away, and I was spared the sin of murder!"

"Murder!"

"Even of murder. You know not the desperate thoughts the wretched harbor for relief! But opportunity was not long want-

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ing, and I enjoyed the momentary, hellish pleasure of revenge. Your father went in quest of his rights, and disease attacked his beloved wife. Yes, foul and unseemly as is my wretched child, the beauty of thy mother was changed to a look still more hideous! Such as Job now seems, was the injured woman on her death-bed. 'I feel all thy justice, Lord of power, and bow before thy will!'"

"Injured woman!" repeated Lionel, "say on, and I will bless thee!"

Abigail gave a groan, so deep and hollow, that, for a moment, the listeners believed it was the parting struggle of the spirit of her son, and she sunk, helplessly, into her seat, again concealing her features in her dress.

"Injured woman!" slowly repeated Ralph, with the most taunting contempt in his accents—"what punishment does not a wanton merit?"

"Ay, injured?" cried the awakened son —"my life on it, thy tale, at least, is false."

The old man was silent, but his lips moved rapidly, as if he muttered an incredulous reply to himself, while a scornful smile cast its bright and peculiar meaning across the wasted lineaments of his face.

"I know not what you may have heard from others," continued Abigail, speaking so low that her words were nearly lost in the difficult and measured breathing of Job—"but I call heaven to witness, that you, now, shall hear no lie. The laws of the province commanded that the victims of the foul distemper should be kept apart, and your mother was placed at the mercy of myself and one other, who loved her still less than I."

"Just Providence! you did no violence?"

"The disease spared us such a crime. She died in her new deformity, while I remained a looker-on, if not in the beauty of my innocence, still free from the withering touch of scorn and want. Yes, I found a sinful but flattering consolation in that thought! Vain, weak, and foolish as I had been, never did I regard my own fresh beauty with half the inward pleasure that I looked upon the foulness of my rival. Your aunt, too—she was not without the instigations of the worker of mischief."

"Speak only of my mother," interrupted the impatient Lionel—"of my aunt I already know the whole."

"Unmoved and calculating as she was, how little did she understand good from evil! She even thought to crack the heart-strings, and render whole, by her weak inventions, that which the power of God could only create. The gentle spirit of thy mother had hardly departed, before a vile plot was hatched to destroy the purity of her fame. Blinded fools that we were. She thought to lead by her soothing arts, aided by his wounded affections, the husband to the feet of her own daughter, the innocent mother of her who stands beside thee; and I was so vain as to hope, that, in time, justice and my boy might plead with the father and seducer, and raise me to the envied station of her whom I hated."

"And this foul calumny you repeated, with all its basest coloring, to my abused father?"

"We did—we did; yes, God, he knows we did! and when he hesitated to believe, I took the holy Evangelists as witnesses of my truth!"

"And he," said Lionel, nearly choked by his emotions—"he believed it!"

"When he heard the solemn oath of one, whose whole guilt, he thought, lay in her weakness to himself, he did. As we listened to his terrible denunciations, and saw the frown which darkened his manly beauty, we both thought we had succeeded. But how little did we know the difference between rooted passion and passing inclination! The heart we thought to alienate from its dead partner, we destroyed; and the reason we conspired to deceive, was maddened!"

When her voice ceased, so profound a silence reigned in the place, that the roar of the distant cannonade sounded close at hand, and even the low murmurs of the excited town swept by, like the whisperings of the wind. Job suddenly ceased to breathe, as though his spirit had only lingered to hear the confession of his mother, and Polwarth dropped the arm of the dead simpleton, unconscious of the interest he had so lately taken in his fate. In the midst of this death-like stillness, the old man stole from the side of the body, and stood before the self-condemned Abigail, whose form was writhing

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under her mental anguish. Crouching more like a tiger than a man, he sprang upon her, with a cry so sudden, so wild, and so horrid, that it caused all within its hearing to shudder with instant dread.

"Beldame!" he shouted, "I have thee now! Bring hither the book! the blessed, holy Word of God! Let her swear, let her swear! Let her damn her perjured soul in impious oaths——"

"Monster! release the woman!" cried Lionel, advancing to the assistance of the struggling penitent; "thou, too, hoary-headed wretch, hast deceived me!"

"Lincoln! Lincoln!" shrieked Cecil, "stay that unnatural hand! you raise it on thy father!"

Lionel staggered back to the wall, where he stood motionless, and gasping for breath. Left to work his own frantic will, the maniac would speedily have terminated the sorrows of the wretched woman, had not the door been burst open with a crash, and the stranger, who was left, by the cunning of the madman, in the custody of the Americans, rushed to the rescue.

"I know your yell, my gentle baronet!" cried the aroused keeper, for such in truth he was, "and I have a mark for your malice, which would have gladly had me hung! But I have not followed you from kingdom to kingdom—from Europe to America, to be cheated by a lunatic!"

It was apparent, by the lowering look of the fellow, how deeply he resented the danger he had just escaped, as he sprang forward to seize his prisoner. Ralph abandoned his hold the instant this hated object appeared, and he darted upon the breast of the other with the undaunted fury that a lion, at bay, would turn upon its foe. The struggle was fierce and obstinate. Hoarse oaths and the most savage execrations burst from the incensed keeper, and were blended with the wildest ravings of madness from Ralph. The excited powers of the maniac at length prevailed, and his antagonist fell under their irresistible impulse. Quicker than thought, Ralph was seen hovering on the chest of his victim, while he grasped his throat with fingers of iron.

"Vengeance is holy!" cried the maniac, bursting into a shout of horrid laughter at his triumph, and shaking his gray locks till they flowed in wild confusion around his glowing eye-balls; "Urim and thummin are the words of glory! Liberty is the shout! Die, damned dog! die like the fiends in darkness, and leave freedom to the air!"

By a mighty effort the gasping man released his throat a little from the gripe that nearly throttled him, and cried, with difficulty—

"For the love of heavenly justice, come to my aid!—will you see a man thus murdered?"

But he addressed himself to the sympathies of the listeners in vain. The females had hid their faces in natural horror; the maimed Polwarth was yet without his artificial limb; and Lionel still looked upon the savage fray with a vacant eye. At this moment of despair, the hand of the keeper was seen plunging with violence into the side of Ralph, who sprang upon his feet at the third blow, laughing immoderately, but with sounds so wild and deep that they seemed to shake his inmost soul. His antagonist profited by the occasion, and darted from the room with the headlong precipitation of guilt.

The countenance of the maniac, as he now stood, struggling between life and death, changed with each fleeting impulse. The blood flowed freely from the wounds in his side, and, as the fatal tide ebbed away, a ray of passing reason lighted his pallid and ghastly features. His inward laugh entirely ceased. The glaring eyeballs became stationary; and his look, gradually softening, settled on the appalled pair, who took the deepest interest in his welfare. A calm and decent expression possessed those lineaments, which had just exhibited the deepest marks of the wrath of God. His lips moved in a vain effort to speak; and, stretching forth his arms in the attitude of benediction, like the mysterious shadow of the chapel, he fell backward on the body of the lifeless and long-neglected Job, himself perfectly dead.

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CHAPTER XXXIV.

"I saw an aged man upon his bier,
His hair was thin and white, and on his brow
A record of the cares of many a year;
Cares that were ended and forgotten now.
And there was sadness round, and faces bow'd,
And woman's tears fell fast, and children wail'd
aloud."—BRYANT.

As the day advanced, the garrison of Boston was put in motion. The same bustle, the same activity, the same gallant bearing in some, and dread reluctance in others, were exhibited as on the morning of the fight of the preceding summer. The haughty temper of the royal commander could ill brook the bold enterprise of the colonists; and, at an early hour, orders were issued to prepare to dislodge them. Every gun that could be brought to bear upon the hills was employed to molest the Americans, who calmly continued their labors, while balls were whistling around them on every side. Towards evening a large force was embarked and conveyed to the castle. Washington appeared on the heights in person, and every military evidence of the intention of a resolute attack on one part and of a stout resistance on the other, became apparent.

But the fatal experience of Breed's had taught a lesson that was still remembered. The same leaders were to be the principal actors in the coming scene, and it was necessary to use the remnants of many of the very regiments which had bled so freely on the former occasion. The half-trained husbandmen of the colonies were no longer despised; and the bold operations of the past winter had taught the English generals that, as subordination increased among their foes, their movements were conducted with a more vigorous direction of their numbers. The day was accordingly wasted in preparations. Thousands of men slept on their arms that night in either army, in the expectation of rising, on the following morning, to be led to the field of slaughter.

It is not improbable, from the tardiness of their movements, that a large majority of the royal forces did not regret the providential interposition, which certainly saved them torrents of blood, and not improbably the ignominy of a defeat. One of the sudden tempests of the climate arose in the darkness, driving before it men and beasts, to seek protection, in their imbecility, from the more powerful warring of the elements. The golden moments were lost; and, after enduring so many privations, and expending so many lives in vain, Howe sullenly commenced his arrangements to abandon a town, on which the English ministry had for years lavished their indignation, with all the acrimony, and, as it now seemed, with the impotency of a blind revenge.

To carry into effect this sudden and necessary determination, was not the work of an hour. As it was the desire of the Americans, however, to receive their town back again as little injured as possible, they forbore to push the advantage they possessed, by occupying those heights, which, in a great measure, commanded the anchorage, as well as a new and vulnerable face of the defences of the king's army. While the semblance of hostilities was maintained by an irregular and impotent cannonade, conducted with so little spirit as to wear the appearance of being intended only to amuse, one side was diligently occupied in preparing to depart, and the other was passively awaiting the moment when they might peaceably repossess their own. It is unnecessary to remind the reader that the entire command of the sea, by the British, would have rendered any serious attempt to arrest their movements perfectly futile.

In this manner a week was passed, after the tempest had abated—the place exhibiting, throughout this period, all the hurry and bustle, the joy and distress, that such an unlooked-for event was likely to create.

Toward the close of one of those busy and stirring days, a short funeral train was seen issuing from a building, which had long been known as the residence of one of the proudest families in the province. Above the outer door of the mansion was suspended a gloomy hatchment, charged with the "courant" deer of Lincoln, encircled by the usual mementos of mortality, and bearing the rare symbol of the "bloody-hand."—This emblem of heraldic grief, which was never adopted in the provinces, except at the death of one of high importance, a custom that has long since disappeared with the usages of the monarchy, had caught the eyes of a few idle boys, who

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alone were sufficiently unoccupied, at that pressing moment, to note its exhibition. With the addition of these truant urchins the melancholy procession took its way towards the neighboring church-yard of the King's Chapel.

The large bier was covered by a pall so ample that it swept the stones of the threshold while entering into the body of the church. Here it was met by the divine we have had occasion to mention more than once, who gazed with a look of strange interest, at the solitary and youthful mourner, that closely followed in his dark weeds. The ceremony, however, proceeded with the usual solemnity, and the attendants slowly moved deeper into the sacred edifice. Next to the young man came the well-known persons of the British commander-in-chief, and of his quickwitted and favorite lieutenant. Between them walked an officer of inferior rank, who, notwithstanding his maimed condition, had been able, by the deliberation of the march, to beguile the ears of his companions, to the very moment of meeting the clergyman, with some tale of no little interest, and great apparent mystery. The remainder of the train, which consisted only of the family of the two generals, and a few menials, came last, if we except the idlers, who stole curiously in their footsteps.

When the service was ended, the same private communication was resumed between the two chieftains and their companion, and continued until they arrived at the open vault, in a distant corner of the enclosure. Here the low conversation ended; and the eye of Howe, which had hitherto been riveted in deep attention on the speaker, began to wander in the direction of the dangerous hills occupied by his enemies. The interruption seemed to have broken the charm of the secret conversation; and the anxious countenances of both the leaders betrayed how soon their thoughts had wandered from a tale of great private distress to their own heavier cares and duties.

The bier was placed before the opening, and the assistants of the sexton advanced to perform their office. When the pall was removed, to the evident amusement of most of the spectators, two coffins were exposed to view. One was clothed in black velvet, studded with silver nails, and ornamented after the richest fashions of human pride, while the other lay in the simple nakedness of the clouded wood. On the breast of the first rose a heavy silver plate, bearing a long inscription, and decorated with the usual devices of heraldry; and on the latter were simply carved on the lid the two initial letters J. P.

The impatient looks of the English generals intimated to Dr. Liturgy the value of every moment, and in less time than we consume in relating it the bodies of the high-descended man of wealth, and of his nameless companion, were lowered into the vault, and left to decay, in silent contact, with that of the woman who, in life, had been so severe a scourge to both. After a hesitation of a single moment, in deference to the young mourner, the gentleman present, perceiving that he manifested a wish to remain, quitted the church-yard in a body, with the exception of the maimed officer, already mentioned, whom the reader has at once recogized to be Polwarth. When the men had replaced the stone above the mouth of the vault, securing it by a stout bar of iron and a heavy lock, they delivered the key to the principal actor in the scene. He received it in silence, and, dropping gold into their hands, motioned to them to depart.

In another instant, a careless observer would have thought, that Lionel and his friend were the only living possessors of the church-yard. But under the adjoining wall, partly hid from observation by the numerous headstones, was the form of a woman, bowed to the earth, while her figure was concealed by the cloak she had gathered shapelessly about her. As soon as the gentlemen perceived they were alone, they slowly advanced to the side of this desolate being.

Their approaching footsteps were not unheeded, though, instead of facing those who so evidently wished to address her, she turned to the wall, and began to trace, with unconscious fingers, the letters of a tablet in slate, which was let into the brickwork, to mark the position of the tomb of the Lechmeres.

"We can do no more," said the young mourner—"all now rest with a mightier hand than any of earth."

The squalid limb that was thrust from

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beneath the red garment trembled, but it still continued its unmeaning employment.

"Sir Lionel Lincoln speaks to you" said Polwarth, on whose arm the youthful baronet leaned.

"Who?" shrieked Abigail Pray, casting aside her covering, and baring those sunken features, on which misery had made terrible additional inroads, within a few days—"I had forgotten—I had forgotten! the son succeeds the father; but the mother must follow her child to the grave!"

"He is honorably interred with those of his blood, and by the side of one who loved his simple integrity!"

"Yes, he is better lodged in death than he was in life! Thank God! he can never know cold nor hunger more!"

"You will find that I have made a provision for your future comfort; and I trust that the close of your life will be happier than its prime."

"I am alone," said the woman, hoarsely. "The old will avoid me, and the young will look upon me in scorn! Perjury and revenge lie heavy on my soul!"

The young baronet was silent, but Polwarth assumed the right to reply—

"I will not pretend to assert," said the worthy captain, "that these are not both wicked companions; but I have no doubt you will find, somewhere in the Bible, a suitable consolation for each particular offence. Let me recommend to you a hearty diet, and I'll answer for an easy conscience. I never knew the prescription fail. Look about you in the world—does your well-fed villain feel remorse! No; it's only when his stomach is empty that he begins to think of his errors! I would also suggest the expediency of commencing soon, with something substantial, as you show altogether too much bone, at present, for a thriving condition. I would not wish to say anything distressing, but we both of us may remember a case where the nourishment came too late."

"Yes, yes, it came too late!" murmured the conscience-stricken woman—"all comes too late! even the penitence, I fear!"

"Say not so," observed Lionel; "you do outrage to the promises of One who never spoke false."

Abigail stole a fearful glance at him, which expressed all the secret terror of her soul, as she half whispered—

"Who witnessed the end of Madam Lechmere! did her spirit pass in peace?"

Sir Lionel again remained profoundly silent.

"I thought it," she continued—"'tis not a sin to be forgotten on a death-bed! To plot evil, and call on God aloud to look upon it! Ay! and to madden a brain, and strip a soul like his to nakedness! Go," she added, beckoning them away with earnestness—"ye are young and happy; why should ye linger near the grave! Leave me, that I may pray among the tombs! If anything can smooth the bitter moment, it is prayer."

Lionel dropped the key he held in his hand at her feet, and said, before he left her—

"Yon vault is closed forever, unless, at your request, it should be opened, at some future time, to place you by the side of your son. The children of those who built it are already gathered there, with the exception of two, who go to the other hemisphere to leave their bones. Take it, and may Heaven forgive you, as I do."

He let fall a heavy purse by the side of the key, and, without uttering more, he again took the arm of Polwarth, and together they left the place.

As they turned through the gateway, into the street, each stole a glance at the distant woman. She had risen to her knees; her hands had grasped a headstone, and her face was bowed nearly to the earth, while, by the writhing of her form, and the humility of her attitude, it was apparent that her spirit struggled powerfully with the Lord for mercy.

Three days afterwards the Americans entered, triumphantly, on the retiring footsteps of the royal army. The first among them, who hastened to visit the graves of their fathers, found the body of a woman, who had seemingly died under the severity of the season. She had unlocked the vault, in a vain effort to reach her child, and there her strength had failed her. Her limbs were decently stretched on the faded grass, while her features were composed, exhibiting in death the bland traces of that remarkable beauty which had distinguished and betrayed her youth. The gold still lay neglected where it had fallen.

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The amazed townsmen avoided this spectacle with horror, rushing into other places to gaze at the changes and the destruction of their beloved birthplace. But a follower of the royal army, who had lingered to plunder, and who had witnessed the interview between the officers and Abigail, shortly succeeded them. He lifted the flag, and lowering the body, closed the vault; then hurling away the key, he seized the money and departed.

The slate has long since mouldered from the wall; the sod has covered the stone, and few are left who can designate the spot where the proud families of Lechmere and Lincoln were wont to inter their dead.

Sir Lionel and Polwarth proceeded, in the deepest silence, to the Long-wharf, where a boat received them. They were rowed to the much-admired frigate, that was standing off-and-on, under easy sail, waiting their arrival. On her decks they met Agnes Danforth, with her eyes softened by tears, though a rich flush mantled on her cheeks, at witnessing the compelled departure of those invaders she had never loved.

"I have only remained to give you a parting kiss, cousin Lionel," said the frank girl, affectionately saluting him, "and now shall take my leave, without repeating those wishes that you know are so often conveyed in my prayers."

"You will then leave us?" said the young baronet, smiling for the first time in many a day. "You know that this cruelty——"

He was interrupted by a loud hem from Polwarth, who advanced, and, taking the hand of the lady, repeated his wish to retain it forever, for at least the fiftieth time. She heard him, in silence, and with much apparent respect, though an arch smile stole upon her gravity, before he had ended. She then thanked him with suitable grace, and gave a final and decided refusal. The captain sustained the repulse like one who had seen much similar service, and politely lent his assistance to help the obdurate girl into her boat. Here she was received by a young man, who was apparelled like an American officer. Sir Lionel thought the bloom on her cheek deepened, as her companion assiduously drew a cloak around her form to protect her from the chill of the water. Instead of returning to the town, the boat, which bore a flag, pulled directly for the shore occupied by the Americans. The following week, Agnes was united to this gentleman, in the bosom of her own family. They soon after took quiet possession of the house in Tremont Street, and of all the large real estate left by Mrs. Lechmere, which had been previously bestowed on her, by Cecil, as a dowry.

As soon as his passengers appeared, the captain of the frigate communicated with his admiral, by signal, and received, in return, the expected order to proceed in the execution of his trust. In a few minutes the swift vessel was gliding by the heights of Dorchester, training her guns on the adverse hills, and hurriedly spreading her canvas as she passed. The Americans, however, looked on in sullen silence, and she was suffered to gain the open ocean, unmolested, when she made the best of her way to England, with the important intelligence of the intended evacuation.

She was speedily followed by the fleet, since which period, the long-oppressed and devoted town of Boston has never been visited by an armed enemy.

During their passage to England, sufficient time was allowed Lionel and his gentle companion to reflect on all that had occurred. Together, and in the fullest confidence, they traced the wanderings of intellect which had so closely and mysteriously connected the deranged father with his impotent child; and, as they reasoned, by descending to the secret springs of his disordered impulses, they were easily enabled to divest the incidents we have endeavored to relate of all their obscurity and doubt.

The keeper, who had been sent in quest of the fugitive madman, never returned to his native land. No offers of forgiveness could induce the unwilling agent in the death of the baronet to trust his person, again, within the influence of the British laws. Perhaps he was conscious of a motive that none but an inward monitor might detect. Lionel, tired at length with importuning without success, commissioned the husband of Agnes to place him in a situation, where, by industry, his future comfort was amply secured.

Polwarth died quite lately. Notwithstand-

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ing his maimed limb, he contrived, by the assistance of his friend, to ascend the ladder of promotion, by regular gradations, nearly to its summit. At the close of his long life, he wrote Gen., Bart., and M. P. after his name. When England was threatened with the French invasion, the garrison he commanded was distinguished for being better provisioned than any other in the realm, and no doubt it would have made a resistance equal to its resources. In Parliament, where he sat for one of the Lincoln boroughs, he was chiefly distinguished for the patience with which he listened to the debates, and for the remarkable cordiality of the "ay" that he pronounced on every vote for supplies. To the day of his death, he was a strenuous advocate for the virtues of a rich diet, in all cases of physical suffering, "especially," as he would add, with an obstinacy that fed itself, "in instances of debility from febrile symptoms."

Within a year of their arrival, the uncle of Cecil died, having shortly before followed an only son to the grave. By this unlooked-for event, Lady Lincoln became the possessor of his large estates, as well as of an ancient barony, that descended to the heirs general. From this time until the eruption of the French Revolution, Sir Lionel Lincoln, and Lady Cardonnell, as Cecil was now styled, lived together in sweetest concord; the gentle influence of her affection moulding and bending the feverish temperament of her husband, at will. The heirloom of the family, that distempered feeling so often mentioned, was forgotten, in the even tenor of their happiness. When the heaviest pressure on the British Constitution was apprehended, and it became the policy of the minister to enlist the wealth and talent of his nation in its support, by propping the existing administration, the rich baronet received a peerage in his own person. Before the end of the century, he was further advanced to a dormant earldom, that had, in former ages, been one of the honors of an elder branch of his family.

Of all the principal actors in the foregoing tale, not one is now living. Even the roses of Cecil and Agnes have long since ceased to bloom, and Death has gathered them in peace and innocence, with all that had gone before. The historical facts of our legend are beginning to be obscured by time; and it is more than probable, that the prosperous and affluent English peer, who now enjoys the honors of the house of Lincoln, never knew the secret history of his family while it sojourned in a remote province of the British empire.

END OF "LIONEL LINCOLN."

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THE BRAVO.

PREFACE.

It is to be regretted the world does not discriminate more justly in its use of political terms. Governments are usually called either monarchies or republics. The former class embraces equally those institutions in which the sovereign is worshipped as a god, and those in which he performs the humble office of a manikin. In the latter we find aristocracies and democracies blended in the same generic appellation. The consequence of a generalization so wide is an utter confusion on the subject of the polity of states.

The author has endeavored to give his countrymen, in this book, a picture of the social system of one of the *soi-disant* republics of the other hemisphere. There has been no attempt to portray historical characters, only too fictitious in their graver dress, but simply to set forth the familiar operations of Venetian policy. For the justification of his likeness, after allowing for the defects of execution, he refers to the well-known work of M. Daru.

A history of the progress of political liberty, written purely in the interests of humanity, is still a desideratum in literature. In nations which have made a false commencement, it would be found that the citizen, or rather the subject, has extorted immunity after immunity, as his growing intelligence and importance have both instructed and required him to defend those particular rights which were necessary to his well-being. A certain accumulation of these immunities constitutes, with a solitary and recent exception in Switzerland, the essence of European liberty, even at this hour. It is scarcely necessary to tell the reader that this freedom, be it more or less, depends on a principle entirely different from our own. Here the immunities do not proceed from, but they are granted to, the government, being, in other words, concessions of natural rights made by the people to the state, for the benefits of social protection. So long as this vital difference exists between ourselves and other nations, it will be vain to think of finding analogies in their institutions. It is true that, in an age like this, public opinion is itself a charter, and that the most despotic government which exists within the pale of Christendom, must, in some degree, respect its influence. The mildest and justest governments in Europe are, at this moment, theoretically despotisms. The characters of both prince and people enter largely into the consideration of so extraordinary results, and it should never be forgotten that, though the character of the latter be sufficiently secure, that of the former is liable to change. But, admitting every benefit which can possibly flow from a just administration, with wise and humane princes, a government which is not properly based on the people, possesses an unavoidable and oppressive evil of the first magnitude, in the necessity of supporting itself by physical force, and onorous impositions, against the natural action of the majority.

Were we to characterize a republic, we should say it was a state in which power, both theoretically and practically, is derived from the nation, with a constant responsibility of the agents of the public to the people; a responsibility that is neither to be evaded nor denied. That such a system is better on a large than on a small scale, though contrary to brilliant theories which have been written to uphold different institutions, must be evident on the smallest reflection, since the danger of all popular governments is from popular mistakes, and a people of diversified interests and extended territorial possessions,

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are much less likely to be the subjects of sinister passions than the inhabitants of a single town or county. If to this definition we should add, as an infallible test of the genus, that a true republic is a government of which all others are jealous and vituperative, on the instinct of self-preservation, we believe there would be no mistaking the class. How far Venice would have been obnoxious to this proof, the reader is left to judge for himself.

CHAPTER I.

I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;
A palace and a prison on each hand.
I saw from out the wave her structures rise,
As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand:
A thousand years their cloudy wings expand
Around me, and a dying glory smiles
O'er the far times when many a subject land
Look'd to the winged lion's marble piles,
Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred isles.—BYRON.

THE sun had disappeared behind the summits of the Tyrolean Alps, and the moon was already risen above the low barrier of the Lido. Hundreds of pedestrians were pouring out of the narrow streets of Venice into the square of Saint Mark, like water gushing through some strait aqueduct, into a broad and bubbling basin. Gallant cavalieri and grave cittadini; soldiers of Dalmatia, and seamen of the galleys; dames of the city, and females of lighter manners; jewelers of the Rialto, and traders from the Levant; Jew, Turk, and Christian; traveller, adventurer, podestà, valet, avvocato and gondolier, held their way alike to the common centre of amusement. The hurried air and careless eye; the measured step and jealous glance; the jest and laugh; the song of the cantatrice, and the melody of the flute; the grimace of the buffoon, and the tragic frown of the improvisatore; the pyramid of the grotesque, the compelled and melancholy smile of the harpist, cries of water-sellers, cowls of monks, plumage of warriors, hum of voices, and the universal movement and bustle, added to the more permanent objects of the place, rendered the scene the most remarkable of Christendom.

On the very confines of that line which separates western from eastern Europe, and in constant communication with the latter, Venice possessed a greater admixture of character and costume than any other of the numerous ports of that region. A portion of this peculiarity is still to be observed, under the fallen fortunes of the place; but at the period of our tale, the city of the isles, though no longer mistress of the Mediterranean, nor even of the Adriatic, was still rich and powerful. Her influence was felt in the councils of the civilized world, and her commerce, though waning, was yet sufficient to uphold the vast possessions of those families whose ancestors had become rich in the day of her prosperity. Men lived among her islands in that state of incipient lethargy which marks the progress of a downward course, whether the decline be of a moral or of a physical decay.

At the hour we have named, the vast parallelogram of the piazza was filling fast, the cafés and casinos within the porticos, which surround three of its sides, being already thronged with company. While all beneath the arches was gay and brilliant with the flare of torch and lamp, the noble range of edifices called the Procuratories, the massive pile of the Ducal Palace, the most ancient Christian church, the granite columns of the piazzetta, the triumphal masts of the great square, and the giddy tower of the campanile were slumbering in the more mellow glow of the moon.

Facing the wide area of the great square stood the quaint and venerable cathedral of San Marco. A temple of trophies, and one equally proclaiming the prowess and the piety of its founders, this remarkable structure presided over the other fixtures of the place, like a monument of the republic's antiquity and greatness. Its Saracenic architecture, the rows of precious but useless little columns that load its front, the low Asiatic domes which rest upon its walls in the repose of a thousand years, the rude and gaudy mosaics, and above all the captured horses of Corinth which start from out the sombre mass in the glory of Grecian art, received from the solemn and appropriate light, a character of melancholy and mystery, that well comported with the thick recollections which crowd the mind as the eye gazes at this rare relic of the past.

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As fit companions to this edifice, the other peculiar ornaments of the place stood at hand. The base of the campanile lay in shadow, but a hundred feet of its gray summit received the full rays of the moon along its eastern face. The masts destined to bear the conquered ensigns of Candia, Constantinople, and the Morea, cut the air by its side, in dark and fairy lines, while at the extremity of the smaller square, and dear the margin of the sea, the forms of the winged lion and the patron saint of the city, each on his column of African granite, were distinctly traced against the background of the azure sky.

It was near the base of the former of these massive blocks of stone, that one stood who seemed to gaze at the animated and striking scene with the listlessness and indifference of satiety. A multitude, some in masks and others careless of being known, had poured along the quay into the piazzetta, on their way to the principal square, while this individual had scarce turned a glance aside, or changed a limb in weariness. His attitude was that of patient, practised, and obedient waiting on another's pleasure. With folded arms, a body poised on one leg, and a vacant though good-humored eye, he appeared to attend some beck of authority ere he quitted the spot. A silken jacket, in whose tissue flowers of the gayest colors were interwoven, the falling collar of scarlet, the bright velvet cap with armorial bearings embroidered on its front, proclaimed him to be a gondolier in private service.

Wearied at length with the antics of a distant group of tumblers, whose pile of human bodies had for a time arrested his look, this individnal turned away, and faced the light air from the water. Recognition and pleasure shot into his countenance, and in a moment his arms were interlocked with those of a swarthy mariner, who wore the loose attire and Phrygian cap of men of his calling. The gondolier was the first to speak, the words flowing from him in the soft accents of his native islands.

"Is it thou, Stefano! They said thou hadst fallen into the gripe of the devils of Barbary, and that thou wast planting flowers for an infidel with thy hands, and watering them with thy tears!"

The answer was in the harsher dialect of Calabria, and it was given with the rough familiarity of a seaman.

"La Bella Sorrentina is no housekeeper of a curato! She is not a damsel to take a siesta with a Tunisian rover prowling about in her neighborhood. Hadst ever been beyond the Lido, thou wouldst have known the difference between chasing the felucca and catching her."

"Kneel down, and thank San Teodoro for his care. There was much praying on thy decks that hour, caro Stefano, though none is bolder among the mountains of Calabria when thy felucca is once safely drawn upon the beach!"

The mariner cast a half-comic, half-serious glance upward at the image of the patron saint, ere he replied.

"There was more need of the wings of thy lion than of the favor of thy saint. I never come further north for aid than San Gennaro, even when it blows a hurricane."

"So much the worse for thee, caro, since the good bishop is better at stopping the lava than at quieting the winds. But there was danger, then, of losing the felucca and her brave people among the Turks?"

"There was, in truth, a Tunis-man prowling about, between Stromboli and Sicily; but, Ali di San Michele! he might better have chased the cloud above the volcano, than run after the felucca in a sirocco!"

"Thou wast chicken-hearted, Stefano?"

"I!—I was more like thy lion, here, with some small additions of chains and muzzles."

"As was seen by thy felucca's speed?"

"Cospetto! I wished myself a knight of San Giovanni a thousand times during the chase, and La Bella Sorrentina a brave Maltese galley, if it were only for the cause of Christian honor! The miscreant hung upon my quarter for the better part of three glasses; so near, that I could tell which of the knaves wore dirty cloth in his turban, and which clean. It was a sore sight to a Christian, Stefano, to see the right thus borne upon by an infidel."

"And thy feet warmed with the thought of the bastinado, caro mio?"

"I have run too often barefoot over our Calabrian mountains, to tingle at the sole with every fancy of that sort."

"Every man has his weak spot, and I

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know thine to be dread of a Turk's arm. Thy native hills have their soft as well as their hard ground, but it is said the Tunisian chooses a board knotty as his own heart when he amuses himself with the wailings of a Christian."

"Well, the happiest of us all must take such as fortune brings. If my soles are to be shod with blows, the honest priest of Sant' Agata will be cheated of a penitent. I have bargained with the good curato, that all such accidental calamities shall go in the general account of penance. But how fares the world of Venice?—and what dost thou among the canals at this season, to keep the flowers of thy jacket from wilting?"

"To-day as yesterday, and to-morrow will be as to-day. I row the gondola from the Rialto to the Giudecca; from San Giorgio to San Marco; from San Marco to the Lido, and from the Lido home. There are no Tunismen, by the way, to chill the heart or warm the feet."

"Enough of friendship. And is there nothing stirring in the republic?—no young noble drowned, nor any Jew hanged?"

"Nothing of that much interest—except the calamity which befell Pietro. Thou rememberest Pietrello? he who crossed into Dalmatia with thee once, as a supernumerary, the time he was suspected of having aided the young Frenchman in running away with a senator's daughter?"

"Do I remember the last famine? The rogue did nothing but eat maccaroni, and swallow the lachrymæ Christi, which the Dalmatian count had on freight."

"Poverino! His gondola has been run down by an Ancona-man, who passed over the boat, as if it were a senator stepping on a fly."

"So much for little fish coming into deep water."

"The honest fellow was crossing the Giudecca, with a stranger who had occasion to say his prayers at the Redentore, when the brig hit him in the canopy, and broke up the gondola as if it had been a bubble left by the Bucentaur."

"The padrone should have been too generous to complain of Pietro's clumsiness, since it met with its own punishment."

"Madre di Dio! He went to sea that hour, or he might be feeding the fishes of the Lagunes! There is not a gondolier in Venice who did not feel the wrong at his heart; and we know how to obtain justice for an insult, as well as our masters."

"Well, a gondola is mortal, as well as a felucca, and both have their time; better die by the prow of a brig than fall into the gripe of a Turk.—How is thy young master, Gino? and is he likely to obtain his claims of the senate?"

"He cools himself in the Giudecca in the morning; and if thou wouldst know what he does at evening, thou hast only to look among the nobles in the Broglio."

As the gondolier spoke, he glanced an eye aside, at a group of patrician rank, who paced the gloomy arcades which supported the superior walls of the doge's palace, a spot sacred, at times, to the uses of the privileged.

"I am no stranger to the habit thy Venetian nobles have of coming to that low colonnade at this hour, but I never before heard of their preferring the waters of the Giudecca for their baths."

"Were even the doge to throw himself out of a gondola, he must sink or swim like a meaner Christian."

"Acqua dell' Adriatico! Was the young duca going to the Redentore, too, to say his prayers?"

"He was coming back after having—but what matters it in what canal a young noble sighs away the night! We happened to be near when the Ancona-man performed his feat; while Giorgio and I were boiling with rage at the awkwardness of the stranger, my master, who never had much taste or knowledge in gondolas, went into the water to save the young lady from sharing the fate of her uncle."

"Diavolo! This is the first syllable thou hast uttered concerning any young lady, or of the death of her uncle."

"Thou wert thinking of the Tunis-man, and hast forgotten. I must have told thee how near the beautiful signora was to sharing the fate of the gondola, and how the loss of the Roman marchese weighs, in addition, on the soul of the padrone."

"Santo padro! That a Christian should die the death of a hunted dog by the carelessness of a gondolier!"

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"It may have been lucky for the Anconaman that it so fell out, for they say the Roman was one of influence enough to make a senator cross the Bridge of Sighs, at need."

"The devil take all careless watermen, say I!—And what became of the awkward rogue?"

"I tell thee he went outside the Lido, that very hour, or——"

"Pietrello?"

"He was brought up by the oar of Giorgio, for both of us were active in saving the cushions and other valuables."

"Could'st thou do nothing for the poor Roman? Ill luck may follow that brig on account of his death!"

"Ill luck follow her, say I, till she lays her bones on some rock that is harder than the heart of her padrone. As for the stranger, we could do no more than to offer up a prayer to San Teodoro, since he never rose after the blow. But what has brought thee to Venice, caro mio? for thy ill-fortune with the oranges, in the last voyage, caused thee to denounce the place."

The Calabrian laid a finger on one cheek, and drew the skin down in a manner to give a droll expression to his dark, comic eye, while the whole of his really fine Grecian face was charged with an expression of coarse humor.

"Look you, Gino—thy master sometimes calls for his gondola between sunset and morning?"

"An owl is not more wakeful than he has been of late. This head of mine has not been on a pillow before the sun has come above the Lido, since the snows melted from Monselice."

"And when the sun of thy master's countenance sets in his own palazzo, thou hastenest off to the bridge of the Rialto, among the jewelers and butchers, to proclaim the manner in which he passed the night?"

"Diamine! 'Twould be the last night I served the Duca di Sant' Agata were my tongue so limber! The gondolier and the confessor are the two privy councillors of a noble, Master Stefano, with this small difference—that the east only knows what the sinner wishes to reveal, while the first sometimes knows more. I can find a safer, if not a more honest employment, than to be running about with my master's secrets in the air."

"And I am wiser than to let every Jew broker in San Marco, here, have a peep into my charter-party."

"Nay, old acquaintance, there is some difference between our occupations, after all. A padrone of a felucca cannot in justice be compared to the most confidential gondolier of a Neapolitan duke, who has an unsettled right to be admitted to the council of three hundred."

"Just the difference between smooth water and rough—you ruffle the surface of a canal with a lazy oar, while I run the channel of Piombino in a mistral, shoot the Faro of Messina in a white squall, double Santa Maria de Leuca in a breathing Levanter, and come skimming up the Adriatic, before a sirrocco that is hot enough to cook my maccaroni, and which sets the whole sea boiling worse than the caldrons of Scylla."

"Hist!" eagerly interrupted the gondolier, who had indulged, with Italian humor, in the controversy for pre-eminence, though without any real feelings, "here comes one who may think, else, we shall have need of his hand to settle the dispute—Eccolo!"

The Calabrian recoiled a pace, in silence, and stood regarding the individual who had caused this hurried remark, with a gloomy but steady air. The stranger moved slowly past. His years were under thirty, though the calm gravity of his countenance imparted to it a character of more mature age. The cheeks were bloodless, but they betrayed rather the pallid hue of mental than of bodily disease. The perfect condition of the physical man was sufficiently exhibited in the muscular fulness of a body which, though light and active, gave every indication of strength. His step was firm, assured, and even; his carriage erect and easy, and his whole mien was strongly characterized by a self-possession that could scarcely escape observation. And yet his attire was that of an inferior class. A doublet of common velvet, a dark Montero cap, such as was then much used in the southern countries of Europe, with other vestments of a similar fashion, composed his dress. The face was melancholy rather than sombre, and its perfect repose accorded well with the striking calm-

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ness of the body. The lineaments of the former, however, were bold and even noble, exhibiting that strong and manly outline which is so characteristic of the finer class of the Italian countenance. Out of this striking array of features gleamed an eye, that was full of brilliancy, meaning, and passion.

As the stranger passed, his glittering organs rolled over the persons of the gondolier and his companion, but the look, though searching, was entirely without interest. 'Twas the wandering but wary glance, which men who have much reason to distrust, habitually cast on a multitude. It turned, with the same jealous keenness, on the face of the next it encountered, and by the time the steady and well-balanced form was lost in the crowd, that quick and glowing eye had gleamed, in the same rapid and uneasy manner, on twenty others.

Neither the gondolier nor the mariner of Calabria spoke, until their riveted gazes after the retiring figure became useless. Then the former simply ejaculated with a strong respiration :

"Jacopo!"

His companion raised three of his fingers, with an occult meaning, toward the palace of the doges.

"Do they let him take the air, even in San Marco?" he asked, in unfeigned surprise.

"It is not easy, caro amico, to make water run up stream, or to stop the downward current. It is said that most of the senators would sooner lose their hopes of the horned bonnet, than lose him. Jacopo! He knows more family secrets than the good Priore of San Marco himself, and he, poor man, is half his time in the confessional."

"Ay, they are afraid to put him in an iron jacket, lest awkward secrets should be squeezed out."

"Corpo di Bacco! there would be little peace in Venice, if the Council of Three should take it into their heads to loosen the tongue of yonder man in that rude manner."

"But they say, Gino, that thy Council of Three has a fashion of feeding the fishes of the Lagunes, which might throw the suspicion of his death on some unhappy Anconaman, were the body ever to come up again."

"Well, no need of bawling it aloud, as if thou wert hailing a Sicilian through thy trumpet, though the fact should be so. To say the truth, there are few men in business who are thought to have more custom than he who has just gone up the piazzetta."

"Two sequins!" rejoined the Calabrian, enforcing his meaning by a significant grimace.

"Santa Madonna! Thou forgettest, Stefano, that not even the confessor has any trouble with a job in which he has been employed. Not a caratano less than a hundred will buy a stroke of his art. Your blows, for two sequins, leave a man leisure to tell tales, or even to say his prayers half the time."

"Jacopo!" ejaculated the other, with an emphasis which seemed to be a sort of summing up of all his aversion and horror.

The gondolier shrugged his shoulders, with quite as much meaning as a man born on the shores of the Baltic could have conveyed by words; but he, too, appeared to think the matter exhausted.

"Stefano Milano," he added, after a moment of pause, "there are things in Venice which he, who would eat his maccaroni in peace, would do well to forget. Let thy errand in port be what it may, thou art in good season to witness the regatta which will be given by the state itself to-morrow."

"Hast thou an oar for that race?"

"Giorgo's, or mine, under the patronage of San Teodoro. The prize will be a silver gondola to him who is lucky or skilful enough to win; and then we shall have the nuptials with the Adriatic."

"Thy nobles had best woo the bride well, for there are heretics who lay claim to her good-will. I met a rover of strange rig and miraculous fleetness, in rounding the headlands of Otranto, who seemed to have half a mind to follow the felucca in her path toward the Lagunes."

"Did the sight warm thee at the soles of thy feet, Gino dear?"

"There was not a turbaned head on his deck, but every sea-cap set upon a well-covered poll and a shorn chin. Thy Bucentaur is no longer the bravest craft that floats between Dalmatia and the islands, though her gilding may glitter brightest. There are men beyond the pillars of Hercules who are

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Stretching his arms toward the stars he pronounced the absolution in a voice that was touched with pious fervor.—*The Bravo.*

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not satisfied with doing all that can be done on their own coasts, but who are pretending to do much of that which can be done on ours."

"The republic is a little aged, caro, and years need rest. The joints of the Bucentaur are wrecked by time and many voyages to the Lido. I have heard my master say that they leap of the winged lion is not as far as it was, even in his young days."

"Don Camillo has the reputation of talking boldly of the foundation of this city of piles, when he has the roof of old Sant' Agata safely over his head. Were he to speak more reverently of the horned bonnet, and of the Council of Three, his pretensions to succeed to the rights of his forefathers might seem juster in the eyes of his judges. But distance is a great mellower of colors, and softener of fears. My own opinion of the speed of the felucca, and of the merits of a Turk, undergo changes of this sort between port and the open sea; and I have known thee, good Gino, forget San Teodoro, and bawl as lustily to San Gennaro, when at Naples, as if thou really fancied thyself in danger from the mountain."

"One must speak to those at hand, in order to be quickest heard," rejoined the gondolier, casting a glance that was partly humorous, and not without superstition, upward at the image which crowned the granite column against whose pedestal he still leaned. "A truth which warns us to be prudent, for yonder Jew casts a look this way, as if he felt a conscientious scruple in letting any irreverend remark of ours go without reporting. The bearded old rogue is said to have other dealings with the Three Hundred besides asking for the moneys he has lent to their sons. And so, Stefano, thou thinkest the republic will never plant another mast of triumph in San Marco, or bring more trophies to the venerable church?"

"Napoli herself, with her constant change of masters, is as likely to do a great act on the sea as thy winged beast just now! Thou art well enough to row a gondola in the canals, Gino, or to follow thy master to his Calabrian castle; but if thou wouldst know what passes in the wide world, thou must be content to listen to mariners of the long course. The day of San Marco has gone by, and that of the heretics more north has come."

"Thou hast been much of late among the lying Genoese, Stefano, that thou comest hither with these idle tales of what an heretic can do. Genova la Superba! What has a city of walls to compare with one of canals and islands, like this?—and what has that Appenine republic performed, to be put in comparison with the great deeds of the Queen of the Adriatic? Thou forgottest that Venezia has been——"

"Zitto, zitto! that *has* been, caro mio, is a great word with all Italy. Thou art as proud of the past as a Roman of the Trastevere."

"And the Roman of the Trastevere is right. Is it nothing, Stefano Milano, to be descended from a great and victorious people?"

"It is better, Gino Monaldi, to be one of a people which is great and victorious just now. The enjoyment of the past is like the pleasure of the fool who dreams of the wine he drank yesterday."

"This is well for a Neapolitan, whose country never was a nation," returned the gondolier, angrily. "I have heard Don Camillo, who is one educated as well as born in the land, often say that half of the people of Europe have ridden the horse of Sicily, and used the legs of thy Napoli, except those who had the best right to the services of both."

"Even so; and yet the figs are as sweet as ever and the beccafichi as tender! The ashes of the volcano cover all!"

"Gino," said a voice of authority, near the gondolier.

"Signor."

He who interrupted the dialogue pointed to the boat, without saying more.

"A rivederti," hastily muttered the gondolier. His friend squeezed his hand in perfect amity—for, in truth, they were countrymen by birth, though chance had trained the former on the canals—and, at the next instant, Gino was arranging the cushions for his master, having first aroused his subordinate brother of the oar from a profound sleep.

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CHAPTER II.

Hast ever swam in a gondola at Venice?—
SHAKESPEARE.

When Don Camillo Monforte entered the gondola he did not take his seat in the pavilion. With an arm leaning on the top of the canopy, and his cloak thrown loosely over one shoulder, the young noble stood, in a musing attitude, until his dexterous servitors had extricated the boat from the little fleet which crowded the quay, and had urged it into open water. This duty performed, Gino touched his scarlet cap, and looked at his master, as if to inquire the direction in which they were to proceed. He was answered by a silent gesture that indicated the route of the great canal.

"Thou hast an ambition, Gino, to show thy skill in the regatta?" Don Camillo observed, when they had made a little progress—"The motive merits success. Thou wast speaking to a stranger, when I summoned thee to the gondola!"

"I was asking the news of our Calabrian hills from one who has come into port with his felucca, though the man took the name of San Gennaro to witness that his former luckless voyage should be the last."

"How does he call his felucca, and what is the name of the padrone?"

"La Bella Sorrentina, commanded by a certain Stefano Milano, son of an ancient servant of Sant' Agata. The bark is none of the worst for speed, and it has some reputation for beauty. It ought to be of happy fortune, too, for the good curato recommended it, with many a devout prayer to the Virgin and to San Francesco."

The noble appeared to lend more attention to the discourse, which, until now, on his part, had been commenced in the listless manner with which a superior encourages an indulged dependent.

"La Bella Sorrentina! Have I not reason to know the bark?"

"Nothing more true, Signor. Her padrone has relations at Sant' Agata, as I have told your eccellenza, and his vessel has lain on the bench, near the castle, many a bleak winter."

"What brings him to Venice?"

"That is what I would give my newest jacket of your eccellenza's colors to know, Signor. I have as little wish to inquire into other people's affairs as any one, and I very well know that discretion is the chief virtue of a gondolier. I ventured, however, a deadly hint concerning his errand, such as ancient neighborhood would warrant, but he was as cautious with his answers as if he were weighted with the confessions of fifty Christians. Now, if your eccellenza should see fit to give me authority to question him, in your name, the deuce is in't if between respect for his lord, and good management, we could not draw something more than a false bill of lading from him."

"Thou wilt take thy choice of my gondolas for the regatta, Gino," observed the Duke of Sant' Agata, entering the pavilion, and throwing himself on the glossy black leather cushions, without adverting to the suggestion of his servant.

The gondola continued its noiseless course, with the sprite-like movement peculiar to that description of boat. Gino, who, as superior over his fellow, stood perched on the little arched deck in the stern, pushed his oar with accustomed readiness and skill, now causing the light vessel to sheer to the right, and now to the left, as it glided among the multitude of crafts, of all sizes and uses, which it met in its passage. Palace after palace had been passed, and more than one of the principal canals, which diverged toward the different spectacles, or the other places of resort frequented by his master, were left behind, without Don Camillo giving any new direction. At length the boat arrived opposite to a building, which seemed to excite more than common expectation. Giorgio worked his oar with a single hand, looking over his shoulder at Gino, and Gino permited his blade fairly to trail on the water. Both seemed to await new orders, manifesting something like that species of instinctive sympathy with him they served, which a long practised horse is apt to show when he draws near a gate, that is seldom passed unvisited by his driver.

The edifice which caused this hesitation in the two gondoliers, was one of those residences of Venice which are quite as remarkable for their external riches and ornaments, as for their singular situation amid the waters. A massive rustic basement of marble was seat-

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ed as solidly in the elements, as if it grew from a living rock, while story was seemingly raised on story, in the wanton observance of the most capricious rules of meretricious architecture, until the pile reached an attitude that is little known, except in the dwellings of princes. Colonnades, medallions, and massive cornices, overhung the canal, as if the art of man had taken pride in loading the superstructure in a manner to mock the unstable element which concealed its base. A flight of steps, on which each gentle undulation produced by the passage of the barge washed a wave, conducted to a vast vestibule, that answered many of the purposes of a court. Two or three gondolas were moored near, but the absence of their people showed they were for the use of those who dwelt within. The boats were protected from rough collision with the passing craft, by piles driven obliquely into the bottom. Similar spars, with painted and ornamented heads, that sometimes bore the colors and arms of the proprietor, formed a sort of little haven for the gondolas of the household, before the door of every dwelling of mark.

"Where is it the pleasure of your eccellenza to be rowed?" asked Gino, when he found his sympathetic delay had produced no order.

"To the Palazzo."

Giorgio threw a glance of surprise back at his comrade, but the obedient gondola shot by the gloomy, though rich abode, as if the little bark had suddenly obeyed an inward impulse. In a moment more, it whirled aside, and the hollow sound, caused by the plash of water between high walls, announced its entrance into a narrower canal. With shortened oars, the men still urged the boat ahead, now turning short into some new channel, now glancing beneath a low bridge, and now uttering, in the sweet, shrill tones of the country and their craft, the well-known warning to those who were darting in an opposite direction. A backstroke of Gino's oar, however, soon brought the side of the arrested boat to a flight of steps.

"Thou wilt follow me," said Don Camillo, as he placed his foot, with the customary caution, on the moist stone, and laid a hand on the shoulder of Gino; "I have need of thee."

Neither the vestibule, nor the entrance, nor the other visible accessories of the dwelling, were so indicative of luxury and wealth as that of the palace on the great canal. Still, they were all such as denoted the residence of a noble of consideration.

"Thou wilt do wisely, Gino, to trust thy fortunes to the new gondola," said the master, as he mounted the heavy stone stairs to an upper floor, pointing as he spoke to a new and beautiful boat, which lay in a corner of the large vestibule, as carriages are seen standing in the courts of houses built on more solid ground. "He who would find favor with Jupiter must put his own shoulder to the wheel, thou knowest, my friend."

The eye of Gino brightened, and he was voluble in his expression of thanks. They had ascended to the first floor, and were already deep in a suit of gloomy apartments, before the gratitude and professional pride of the gondolier were exhausted.

"Aided by a powerful arm and a fleet gondola thy chance will be as good as another's, Gino," said Don Camillo, closing the door of his cabinet on the servant; "at present, thou mayest give some proof of zeal in my service, in another manner. Is the face of a man called Jacopo Frontoni known to thee?"

"Eccellenza!" exclaimed the gondolier, gasping for breath.

"I ask thee if thou knowest the countenance of one named Frontoni?"

"His countenance, Signor!"

"By what else would'st thou distinguish a man?"

"A man, Signor Don Camillo!"

"Art thou mocking thy master, Gino? I have asked thee if thou art acquainted with the person of a certain Jacopo Frontoni; a dweller in Venice?"

"Eccellenza, yes."

"He I mean has been long remarked by the misfortunes of his family, the father being now in exile on the Dalmatian coast, or elsewhere."

"Eccellenza, yes."

"There are many of the name of Frontoni, and it is important that thou should'st not mistake the man. Jacopo, of that family, is a youth of some five-and-twenty, of an active frame and melancholy visage, and of less

vivacity of temperament, than is wont, at his years."

"Eccellenza, yes."

"One who resorts but little with his fellows, and who is rather noted for the silence and industry with which he attends to his concerns, than for any of the usual pleasantries and trifling of men of his cast. A certain Jacopo Frontoni, that hath his abode somewhere near the arsenal?"

"Cospetto! Signor Duca, the man is as well known to us gondoliers as the bridge of the Rialto! Your eccellenza has no need to trouble yourself to describe him,"

Don Camillo Monforte was searching among the papers of a secretary. He raised his eyes in some little amazement, at the sally of his dependent, and then he quietly resumed his occupation.

"If thou knowest the man, it is enough."

"Eccellenza, yes. And what is your pleasure with this accursed Jacopo!"

The Duke of Sant' Agata seemed to recollect himself. He replaced the papers which had been deranged, and he closed the secretary.

"Gino," he said, in a tone of confidence and amity, "thou wert born on my estates, though so long trained here to the oar in Venice, and thou hast passed thy life in my service."

"Eccellenza, yes."

"It is my desire that thou should'st end thy days where they began. I have had much confidence in thy discretion, hitherto, and I have satisfaction in saying it has never failed thee, notwithstanding thou hast necessarily been a witness of some exploits of youth, which might have drawn embarrassment on thy master, were thy tongue less disposed to silence."

"Eccellenza, yes."

Don Camillo smiled; but the gleam of humor gave way to a look of grave and anxious thought.

"As thou knowest the person of him I have named, our affair is simple. Take this packet," he continued," placing a sealed letter of more than usual size into the hand of the gondolier, and drawing from his finger a signet ring, "with this token of thy authority. Within that arch of the doge's palace, which leads to the canal of San Marco, beneath the Bridge of Sighs, thou wilt find Jacopo. Give him the packet; and should he demand it, withhold not the ring. Wait his bidding, and return with the answer."

Gino received this commission with profound respect, but with an awe he could not conceal. Habitual deference to his master appeared to struggle with deep distaste for the office he was required to perform; and there was even some manifestation of a more principled reluctance, in his hesitating yet humble manner. If Don Camillo noted the air and countenance of his menial at all, he effectually concealed it.

"At the arched passage of the palace, beneath the Bridge of Sighs," he coolly added; "and let thy arrival there be timed, as near as may be, to the first hour of the night."

"I would, Signore, that you had been pleased to command Giorgio and me to row you to Padua!"

"The way is long. Why this sudden wish to weary thyself?"

"Because there is no doge's palace, nor any Bridge of Sighs, nor any dog of Jacopo Frontoni, among the meadows."

"Thou hast little relish for this duty; but thou must know that what the master commands, it is the duty of a faithful follower to perform. Thou wert born my vassal, Gino Monaldi, and though trained from boyhood in this occupation of a gondolier, thou art properly a being of my fiefs, in Napoli."

"St. Gennaro make me grateful for the honor, Signor! But there is not a water-seller in the streets of Venice, nor a mariner on her canals, who does not wish this Jacopo anywhere but in the bosom of Abraham. He is the terror of every young lover, and of all the urgent creditors on the islands."

"Thou seest, silly babbler, there is one of the former, at least, who does not hold him in dread. Thou wilt seek him beneath the Bridge of Sighs, and, showing the signet, deliver the package according to my instructions."

"It is certain loss of character to be seen speaking with the miscreant! So late as yesterday, I heard Annina, the pretty daughter of the old wine-seller on the Lido, declare, that to be seen once in company with Jacopo Frontoni was as bad as to be caught

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twice bringing old rope from the arsenal, as befell Roderigo, her mother's cousin."

"Thy distinctions savor of the morals of the Lido. Remember to exhibit the ring, lest he distrust thy errand."

"Could not your eccellenza set me about clipping the wings of the lion, or painting a better picture than Tiziano di Vecelli? I have a mortal dislike even to pass the mere compliments of the day with one of your cutthroats. Were any of our gondoliers to see me in discourse with the man, it might exceed your eccellenza's influence to get me a place in the regatta.

"If he detain thee, Gino, thou wilt wait his pleasure; and if he dismiss thee at once, return hither with all expedition, that I may know the result."

"I very well know, Signor Don Camillo, that the honor of a noble is more tender of reproach than that of his followers, and that the stain upon the silken robe of a senator is seen farther than the spot upon a velvet jacket. If any one unworthy of your eccellenza's notice has dared to offend, here are Giorgio and I, ready, at any time, to show how deeply we can feel an indignity which touches our master's credit; but a hireling of two, or ten, or even of a hundred sequins!"

"I thank thee for the hint, Gino. Go thou and sleep in thy gondola, and bid Giorgio come into my cabinet."

"Signor!"

"Art thou resolute to do none of my biddings?"

"Is it your eccellenza's pleasure that I go to the Bridge of Sighs by the footways of the streets, or by the canals?"

"There may be need of a gondola—thou wilt go with the oar."

"A tumbler shall not have time to turn round before the answer of Jacopo shall be here."

With this sudden change of purpose, the gondolier quitted the room; for the reluctance of Gino disappeared the moment he found the confidential duty assigned him by his master was likely to be performed by another. Descending rapidly, by secret stairs, instead of entering the vestibule, where half-a-dozen menials of different employments were in waiting, he passed by one of the narrow corridors of the palace into an inner court, and thence by a low and unimportant gate into an obscure alley, which communicated with the nearest street.

Though the age is one of so great activity and intelligence, and the Atlantic is no longer a barrier even to the ordinary amusements of life, a great majority of Americans have never had an opportunity of personally examining the remarkable features of a region, of which the town that Gino now threaded with so much diligence, is not the least worthy of observation. Those who have been so fortunate as to have visited Italy, therefore, will excuse us if we make a brief, but what we believe useful, digression, for the benefit of those who have not had that advantage.

The city of Venice stands on a cluster of low, sandy islands. It is probable that the country which lies nearest to the gulf, if not the whole of the immense plain of Lombardy itself, is of alluvial formation. Whatever may have been the origin of that wide and fertile kingdom, the causes which have given to the Lagunes their existence, and to Venice its unique and picturesque foundation, are too apparent to be mistaken. Several torrents, which flow from the valleys of the Alps, pour their tribute into the Adriatic at this point. Their waters come charged with the débris of the mountains, pulverized nearly to their original elements. Released from the violence of the stream, these particles have necessarily been deposited in the gulf, at the spot where they have first become subjected to the power of the sea. Under the influence of counteracting currents, eddies, and waves, the sands have been thrown into submarine piles, until some of the banks have arisen above the surface, forming islands, whose elevation has been gradually augmented by the decay of vegetation. A glance at the map will show that, while the Gulf of Venice is not literally, it is, practically, considered with reference to the effect produced by the southeast wind called the sirocco, at the head of the Adriatic. This accidental circumstance is probably the reason why the Lagunes have a more determined character at the mouths of the minor streams that empty themselves here, than at the mouths of most of the other rivers, which

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equally flow from the Alps or the Apennines, into the same shallow sea.

The natural consequence of a current of a river meeting the waters of any broad basin, and where there is no base of rock, is the formation, at or near the spot where the opposing actions are neutralized, of a bank, which is technically called a bar. The coast of the Union furnishes constant evidence of the truth of this theory, every river having its bar, with channels that are often shifted, or cleared, by the freshets, the gales, or the tides. The constant and powerful operation of the southeastern winds on one side, with the periodical increase of the Alpine streams on the other, have converted this bar at the entrance of the Venetian Lagunes, into a succession of long, low, sandy islands, which extend in a direct line, nearly across the mouth of the gulf. The waters of the rivers have necessarily cut a few channels for their passage, or, what is now a lagune, would long since have become a lake. Another thousand years may so far change the character of this extraordinary estuary, as to convert the channels of the bay into rivers, and the muddy banks into marshes and meadows, resembling those that are now seen for so many leagues inland.

The low margin of sand that, in truth, gives all its maritime security to the port of Venice and the Lagunes, is called the Lido di Palestrino. It has been artificially connected and secured, in many places, and the wall of the Lido (literally the beach), though incomplete, like most of the great and vaunted works of the other hemisphere, and more particularly of Italy, ranks with the mole of Ancona, and the sea-wall of Cherbourg. The hundred little islands which now contain the ruins of what, during the Middle Ages, was the mart of the Mediterranean, are grouped together within cannon-shot of the natural barrier. Art has united with nature to turn the whole to good account; and, apart from the influence of moral causes, the rivalry of a neighboring town, which has been fostered by political care, and the gradual filling up of the waters by the constant deposit of the streams, it would be difficult to imagine a more commodious, or a safer haven when entered, than that which Venice affords, even to this hour.

As all the deeper channels of the Lagunes have been preserved, the city is intersected, in every direction, by passages, which, from their appearance, are called canals, but which, in truth, are no more than so many small natural branches of the sea. On the margin of these passages, the walls of the dwellings arise literally from out of the water, since economy of room has caused their owners to extend their possessions to the very verge of the channel in the manner that quays and wharves are pushed into the streams in our own country. In many instances the islands themselves were no more than banks, which were periodically bare, and on all, the use of piles has been necessary to support the superincumbent loads of palaces, churches, and public monuments, under which, in the course of ages, the humble spits of sand have been made to groan.

The great frequency of the canals, and perhaps some attention to economy of labor, has given to by far the greater part of the buildings the facility of an approach by water. But, while nearly every dwelling has one of its fronts on a canal, there are always communications by the rear with the interior passages of the town. It is a fault in most descriptions, that while the stranger hears so much of the canals of Venice, but little is said of her streets; still, narrow, paved, commodious, and noiseless passages, of this description, intersect all the islands, which communicate with each other by means of a countless number of bridges. Though the hoof of a horse, or the rumbling of a wheel, is never heard in these strait avenues, they are of great resort for all the purposes of ordinary intercourse.

Gino issued into one of these thoroughfares, when he quitted the private passage which communicated with the palace of his master. He threaded the throng by which it was crowded with a dexterity that resembled the windings of an eel among the weeds of the Lagunes. To the numerous greetings of his fellows, he replied only by nods; nor did he once arrest his footsteps, until they had led him through the door of a low and dark dwelling, that stood in a quarter of the place which was inhabited by people of an inferior condition. Groping his way among casts, cordage, and rubbish of all descrip-

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tions, the gondolier succeeded in finding an inner and retired door, that opened into a small room, whose only light came from a species of well, that descended between the walls of the adjacent houses and that in which he was.

"Blessed St. Anne! Is it thou, Gino Monaldi!" exclaimed a smart Venetian grisette, whose tones and manner betrayed as much of coquetry as of surprise. "On foot, and by the secret door; is this an hour to come on any of thy errands?"

"Truly, Annina, it is not the season for affairs with thy father, and it is something early for a visit to thee. But there is less time for words than for action just now. For the sake of San Teodora, and that of a constant and silly young man, who, if not thy slave, is at least thy dog, bring forth the jacket I wore when we went together to see the merry-making at Fusina."

"I know nothing of thy errand, Gino, nor of thy reason for wishing to change thy master's livery for the dress of a common boatman. Thou art far more comely with those silken flowers than in this faded velveteen; and if I have ever said aught in commendation of its appearance, it was because we were bent on merry-making; and being one of the party, it would have been churlish to have withheld a word of praise to a companion, who, as thou knowest, does not dislike a civil speech in his own praise."

"Zitto, zitto! here is no merry-making and companions, but a matter of gravity, and one that must be performed off-hand. The jacket, if thou lovest me!"

Annina, who had not neglected essentials while she moralized on motives, threw the garment on a stool that stood within reach of the gondolier's hand, as he made this strong appeal, in a way to show that she was not to be surprised out of a confession of this sort, even in the most unguarded moment.

"If I love thee, truly! Thou hast the jacket, Gino, and thou mayest search in its pockets for an answer to thy letters, for which I do not thank thee for having got the duca's secretary to indite. A maiden should be discreet in affairs of this sort, for one never knows but he may make a confidant of a rival."

"Every word of it is as true as if the devil himself had done the office for me, girl," muttered Gino, uncasing himself from his flowery vestment, and as rapidly assuming the plainer garment he had sought. "The cap, Annina, and the mask?"

"One who wears so false a face, in common, has little need of a bit of silk to conceal his countenance," she answered, throwing him, notwithstanding, both the articles he required.

"This is well—Father Battista himself, who boasts he can tell a sinner from a penitent merely by the savor of his presence, would never suspect a servitor of Don Camillo Monforte in this dress! Cospetto! but I have half a mind to visit that knave of a Jew, who has got thy golden chain in pledge, and give him a hint of what may be the consequences, should he insist on demanding double the rate of interest we agreed on."

"'Twould be Christian justice! but what would become of thy matter of gravity the while, Gino, and of thy haste to enter on its performance?"

"Thou sayest truly, girl. Duty, above all other things; though to frighten a grasping Hebrew may be as much of a duty as other matters. Are all thy father's gondolas in the water?"

"How else could he be gone to the Lido, and my brother Luigi to Fusina, and the two serving-men on the usual business to the islands, or how else should I be alone?"

"Diavolo! is there no boat in the canal?"

"Thou art in unwonted haste, Gino, now thou hast a mask and a jacket of velvet! I know not that I should suffer one to enter my father's house, when I am in it alone, and take such disguises to go abroad, at this hour. Thou wilt tell me thy errand, that I may judge of the propriety of what I do."

"Better ask the Three Hundred to open the leaves of their book of doom! Give me the key of the outer door, girl, that I may go my way."

"Not till I know whether this business is likely to draw down upon my father the displeasure of the senate. Thou knowest, Gino, that I am——"

"Diamine! There goes the clock of San Marco, and I tarry past my hour. If I am too late, the fault will rest with thee!"

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"'Twill not be the first of thy oversights, which it has been my business to excuse. Here thou art, and here shalt thou remain, until I know the errand which calls for a mask and jacket, and all about this matter of gravity."

"This is talking like a jealous wife, instead of a reasonable girl, Annina. I have told thee that I am on business of the last importance, and that delay may bring heavy calamities."

"On whom?—What is thy business? Why art thou, whom in general it is necessary to warn from this house by words many times repeated, now, in such a haste to leave it?"

"Have I not told thee, girl, 'tis an errand of great concern to six noble families, and if I fail to be in season, there may be strife—ay, between the Florentine and the republic!"

"Thou hast said nothing of the sort, nor do I put faith in thy being an ambassador of San Marco. Speak truth for once, Gino Monaldi, or lay aside the mask and jacket, and take up thy flowers of Sant' Agata."

"Well, then, as we are friends, and I have faith in thy discretion, Annina, thou shalt know the truth to the extremity, for I find the bell has only tolled the quarters, which leaves me yet a moment for confidence."

"Thou lookest at the wall, Gino, and art consulting thy wits for some plausible lie!"

"I look at the wall because conscience tells me that too much weakness for thee is about to draw me astray from duty. What thou takest for deceit is only shame and modesty."

"Of that we shall judge, when the tale is told."

"Then listen. Thou hast heard of the affair between my master and the niece of the Roman Marchese, who was drowned in the Giudecca, by the carelessness of an Anconaman, who passed over the gondola of Pietro as if his felucca had been a galley of state?"

"Who has been upon the Lido, the month past, without hearing the tale repeated, with every variation of a gondolier's anger?"

"Well, the matter is likely to come to a conclusion this night; my master is about to do, as I fear, a very foolish thing!"

"He will be married?"

"Or worse;—I am sent, in all haste and secrecy in search of a priest."

Annina manifested strong interest in the fiction of the gondolier. Either from a distrustful temperament, long habit, or great familiarity with the character of her companion, however, she did not listen to his explanation without betraying some doubts of its truth.

"This will be a sudden bridal feast!" she said, after a moment of pause—"'Tis well that few are invited, or its savor might be spoiled by the Three Hundred! To what convent art thou sent?"

"My errand is not particular. The first that may be found, provided he be a Franciscan, and a priest likely to have bowels for lovers in haste."

"Don Camillo Monforte, the heir of an ancient and great line, does not wive with so little caution. Thy false tongue has been trying to deceive me, Gino; but long use should have taught thee the folly of the effort. Unless thou sayest truth, not only shalt thou not go to thy errand, but here art thou a prisoner at my pleasure."

"I may have told thee what I expect will shortly happen, rather than what has happened. But Don Camillo keeps me so much upon the water of late, that I do little beside dream, when not at the oar."

"It is vain to attempt deceiving me, Gino, for thine eye speaketh truth, let thy tongue and brains wander where they will. Drink of this cup, and disburthen thy conscience, like a man."

"I would that thy father would make the acquaintance of Stefano Milano!" resumed the gondolier, taking a long breath, after a still longer draught. "'Tis a padrone of Calabria, who oftentimes brings into the port excellent liquors of his country, and who would pass a cask of the red lachrymæ Christi through the Broglio itself, and not a noble of them all should see it. The man is here at present, and, if thou wilt, he shall not be long without coming into terms with thee for a few skins."

"I doubt if he have better liquors than this which hath ripened upon the sands of the Lido. Take another draught, for the second taste is thought to be better than the first."

"If the wine improve in this manner, thy father should be heavy-hearted at the sight of the lees! 'Twould be no more

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than charity to bring him and Stefano acquainted."

"Why not do it, immediately? His felucca is in the port, thou sayest, and thou canst lead him hither by the secret door and the lanes."

"Thou forgettest my errand. Don Camillo is not used to be served the second. Cospetto! 'Twere a pity that any other got the liquor which I am certain the Calabrian has in secret."

"This errand can be no matter of a moment, like that of being sure of wine of the quality thou namest; or, if it be, thou canst first dispatch thy master's business, and then to the port, in quest of Stefano. That the purchase may not fail, I will take a mask and be thy companion, to see thee Calabrian. Thou knowest my father hath much confidence in my judgment in matters like this."

While Gino stood half stupified, and half delighted at this proposition, the ready and wily Annina made some slight change in her outer garments, placed a silken mask before her face, applied a key to the door, and beckoned to the gondolier to follow.

The canal, with which the dwelling of the wine-dealer communicated, was narrow, gloomy, and little frequented. A gondola of the plainest description was fastened near, and the girl entered it, without appearing to think any further arrangement necessary. The servant of Don Camillo hesitated a single instant, but having seen that his half-meditated project of escaping by the use of another boat, could not be accomplished for want of means, he took his wonted place in the stern, and began to ply the oar with mechanical readiness.

CHAPTER III.

What well-appointed leader fronts us here?
—*King Henry VI.*

THE presence of Annina was a grave embarrassment to Gino. He had his secret wishes and limited ambition, like other men, and among the strongest of the former was the desire to stand well in the favor of the wine-seller's daughter. But the artful girl, in catering to his palate with a liquor that was scarcely less celebrated among people of his class for its strength than its flavor, had caused a momentary confusion in the brain of Gino, that required time to disperse, The boat was in the grand canal, and far on its way to the place of its destination, before this happy purification of the intellects of the gondolier had been sufficiently effected. By that time, however, the exercise of rowing, the fresh air of the evening, and the sight of so many accustomed objects, restored his faculties to the necessary degree of coolness and forethought. As the boat approached the end of the canal, he began to cast his eyes about him in quest of the well-known felucca of the Calabrian.

Though the glory of Venice had departed, the trade of the city was not then at its present low ebb. The port was still crowded with vessels from many distant havens, and the flags of most of the maritime states of Europe were seen, at intervals, within the barrier of the Lido. The moon was now sufficiently high to cast its soft light on the whole of the glittering basin, and a forest, composed of lateen yards, of the slender masts of polaccas, and of the more massive and heavy hamper of regularly rigged ships, was to be seen rising above the tranquil element.

"Thou art no judge of a vessel's beauty, Annina," said the gondolier, who was deeply housed in the pavilion of the boat, "else should I tell thee to look at this stranger from Candia. 'Tis said that a fairer model has never entered within the Lido than that same Greek!"

"Our errand is not with the Candian trader, Gino; therefore, ply thy oar, for time presses."

"There's plenty of rough Greek wine in his hold; but, as thou sayest, we have naught with him. Yon tall ship, which is moored without the smaller craft of our seas, is the vessel of a Lutheran, from the islands of Inghilterra. 'Twas a sad day for the republic, girl, when it first permitted the stranger to come into the waters of the Adriatic!"

"Is it certain, Gino, that the arm of St. Mark was strong enough to keep him out?"

"Body of Diana! I would rather thou didst not ask that question in a place where so many gondolas are in motion! Here are Ragusan, Maltese, Sicilians, and Tuscans,

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without number; and a little fleet of French lie near each other, there, at the entrance of the Giudecca. They are a people who get together afloat, or ashore, for the benefit of the tongue. Here we are at the end of our journey."

The oar of Gino gave a backward sweep, and the gondola was at rest, by the side of a felucca.

"A happy night to the Bella Sorrentina and her worthy padrone!" was the greeting of the gondolier, as he put his foot on the deck of the vessel. "Is the honest Stefano Milano on board the swift felucca?"

The Calabrian was not slow to answer; and in a few moments the padrone and his two visitors were in close and secret conference.

"I have brought one, here, who will be likely to put good Venetian sequins in thy pocket, caro," observed the gondolier, when the preliminaries of discourse had been properly observed. "She is the daughter of a most conscientious wine-dealer who is quite as ready at transplanting your Sicilian grapes into the islands, as he is willing and able to pay for them.'

"And one, no doubt, as handsome as she is ready," said the mariner, with blunt gallantry, "were the black cloud but fairly driven from before her face."

"A mask is of little consequence in a bargain, provided the money be forthcoming. We are always in the Carnival at Venice; and he who would buy, or he who would sell, has the same right to hide his face as to hide his thoughts. What hast thou in the way of forbidden liquors, Stefano, that my companion may not lose the night in idle words?"

"Per Diana! Master Gino, thou puttest thy questions with little ceremony. The hold of the felucca is empty, as thou mayest see by stepping to the hatches; and, as for any liquor, we are perishing for a drop to warm the blood."

"And so far from coming to seek it here," said Annina, "we should have done better to have gone into the cathedral, and said an ave for thy safe voyage home. And now that our wit is spent, we will quit thee, friend Stefano, for some other less skilful answer."

"Cospetto! thou knowest not what thou sayest," whispered Gino, when he found that the wary Annina was not disposed to remain. "The man never enters the meanest creek in Italy, without having something useful secreted in the felucca, on his own account. One purchase of him would settle the question between the quality of thy father's wines and those of Battista. There is not a gondolier in Venice but will resort to thy shop, if the intercourse with this fellow can be fairly settled."

Annina hesitated; long-practised in the small, but secret, and exceedingly hazardous commerce, which her father, notwithstanding the vigilance and severity of the Venetian police, had thus far successfully driven, she neither liked to risk an exposure of her views to an utter stranger, nor to abandon a bargain that promised to be lucrative. That Gino trifled with her, as to his true errand, needed no confirmation, since a servant of the Duke of Sant' Agata was not likely to need a disguise to search a priest; but she knew his zeal for her personal welfare too well to distrust his faith in a matter that concerned her own safety.

"If thou distrust that any here are the spies of the authorities," she observed to the padrone, with a manner that readily betrayed her wishes, "it will be in Gino's power to undeceive thee. Thou wilt testify, Gino, that I am not to be suspected of treachery in an affair like this."

"Leave me to put a word into the private ear of the Calabrian," said the gondolier, significantly.—"Stefano Milano, if thou love me," he continued, when they were a little apart, "keep the girl in parley, and treat with her fairly for thy adventure."

"Shall I tell the vintage of Don Camillo, or that of the Viceroy of Sicily, caro? There is as much wine of each on board the Bella Sorrentina, as would float the fleet of the republic."

"If, in truth, thou art dry, then feign that thou hast it, and differ in thy prices. Entertain her, but a minute, with fair words, while I can get, unseen, into my gondola; and then, for the sake of an old and tried friend, put her tenderly on the quay, in the best manner thou art able."

"I begin to see into the nature of the trade," returned the pliant padrone, placing a finger on the side of his nose. "I will discourse the woman by the hour, about the

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flavor of the liquor, or if thou wilt, of her own beauty; but to squeeze a drop of anything better than the water of the Lagunes out of the ribs of the felucca, would be a miracle worthy of San Teodoro."

"There is but little need to touch on aught but the quality of thy wine. The girl is not like most of her sex, and she takes sudden offence when there is question of her appearance. Indeed, the mask she wears is as much to hide a face that has little to tempt the eye, as from any wish at concealment."

"Since Gino has entered frankly into the matter," resumed the quick-witted Calabrian, cheerfully, and with an air of sudden confidence, to the expectant Annina, "I begin to see more probability of our understanding each other's meaning. Deign, bella donna, to go into my poor cabin, where we will speak more at our ease, and something more to our mutual profit and mutual security."

Annina was not without secret doubts, but she suffered the padrone to lead her to the stairs of the cabin, as if she were disposed to descend. Her back was no sooner turned, than Gino slid into the gondola, which one shove of his vigorous arm sent far beyond the leap of man. The action was sudden, rapid, and noiseless; but the jealous eye of Annina detected the escape of the gondolier, though not in time to prevent it. Without betraying uneasiness, she submitted to be led below, as if the whole were done by previous concert.

"Gino has said that you have a boat which will do the friendly office to put me on the quay, when our conference is over," she remarked, with a presence of mind that luckily met the expedient of her late companion.

"The felucca itself should do that much, were there want of other means," gallantly returned the mariner when they disappeared in the cabin.

Free to discharge his duty, Gino now plied his task with redoubled zeal. The light boat glided among the vessels, inclining, by the skilful management of his single oar, in a manner to avoid all collision, until it entered the narrow canal which separates the palace of the Doge from the more beautiful and classic structure that contains the prisons of the republic. The bridge, which continues the communication of the quays, was first passed, and then he was stealing beneath that far-famed arch which supports a covered gallery leading from the upper story of the palace into that of the prisons, and which, from its being appropriated to the passage of the accused from their cells to the presence of their judges, has been so poetically, and, it may be added, so pathetically called the Bridge of Sighs.

The oar of Gino now relaxed its efforts, and the gondola approached a flight of steps, over which, as usual, the water cast its little waves. Stepping on the lowest flag, he thrust a small iron spike, to which a cord was attached, into a crevice between two of the stones, and left his boat to the security of this characteristic fastening. When this little precaution was observed, the gondolier passed up lightly beneath the massive arch of the water-gate of the palace, and entered its large but gloomy court.

At that hour, and with the temptation of the gay scene which offered in the adjoining square, the place was nearly deserted. A single female water-carrier was at the well, waiting for the element to filter into its basin, in order to fill her buckets, while her ears listened in dull attention to the hum of the moving crowd without. A halberdier paced the open gallery at the head of the Giant's Stairs, and, here and there, the footfall of other sentinels might be heard among the hollow and ponderous arches of the long corridors. No light was shed from the windows; but the entire building presented a fit emblem of that mysterious power which was known to preside over the fortunes of Venice and her citizens. Ere Gino trusted himself without the shadow of the passage by which he had entered, two or three curious faces had appeared at the opposite entrance of the court, where they paused a moment to gaze at the melancholy and imposing air of the dreaded palace, before they vanished in the throng which trifled in the immediate proximity of that secret and ruthless tribunal, as man riots in security even on the verge of an endless and unforeseen future.

Disappointed in his expectation of meeting him he sought, on the instant, the gondolier advanced, and taking courage by the possibility of his escaping altogether from the interview, he ventured to furnish audible

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evidence of his presence by a loud hem. At that instant a figure glided into the court from the side of the quay, and walked swiftly toward its centre. The heart of Gino beat violently, but he mustered resolution to meet the stranger. As they drew near each other, it became evident, by the light of the moon, which penetrated even to that gloomy spot, that the latter was also masked.

"San Teodoro and San Marco have you in mind!" commenced the gondolier. "If I mistake not, you are the man I am sent to meet."

The stranger started, and first manifesting an intention to pass on quickly, he suddenly arrested the movement to reply.

"This may be so, or not. Unmask, that I may judge by thy countenance if what thou sayest be true."

"By your good leave, most worthy and honorable signor, and if it be equally agreeable to you and my master, I would choose to keep off the evening air by this bit of pasteboard and silk."

"Here are none to betray thee, wert thou naked as at thy birth. Unless certain of thy character, in what manner may I confide in thy honesty?"

"I have no distrust of the virtues of an undisguised face, signor, and therefore do I invite you, yourself, to exhibit what nature has done for you in the way of features, that I, who am to make the confidence, be sure it be to the right person."

"This is well, and gives assurance of thy prudence. I may not unmask, however; and as there seemeth little probability of our coming to an understanding, I will go my way. A most happy night to thee."

"Cospetto!—signor, you are far too quick in your ideas and movements for one little used to negotiations of this sort. Here is a ring whose signet may help us to understand each other."

The stranger took the jewel, and holding the stone in a manner to receive the light of the moon, he started in a manner to betray both surprise and pleasure.

"This is the falcon crest of the Neapolitan—he that is the lord of Sant' Agata!"

"And of many other fiefs, good signor, to say nothing of the honors he claims in Venice. Am I right in supposing my errand with you?"

"Thou hast found one whose present business has no other object than Don Camillo Monforte. But thy errand was not solely to exhibit the signet?"

"So little so, that I have a packet here which waits only for a certainty of the person with whom I speak, to be placed into his hands."

The stranger mused a moment; then glancing a look about him, he answered hurriedly—

"This is no place to unmask, friend, even though we only wear our disguises in pleasantry. Tarry here, and at my return I will conduct thee to a more fitting spot."

The words were scarcely uttered when Gino found himself standing in the middle of the court alone. The masked stranger had passed swiftly on, and was at the bottom of the Giant's Stairs, ere the gondolier had time for reflection. He ascended with a light and rapid step, and without regarding the halberdier, he approached the first of three or four orifices which opened into the wall of the palace, and which, from the heads of the animal being carved in relief around them, had become famous as the receptacles of secret accusations, under the name of the Lion's Mouths. Something he dropped into the grinning aperture of the marble, though what, the distance and the obscurity of the gallery prevented Gino from perceiving; and then his form was seen gliding like a phantom down the flight of massive steps.

Gino had retired toward the arch of the water-gate, in expectation that the stranger would rejoin him within its shadows; but, to his great alarm, he saw the form darting through the outer portal of the palace into the square of St. Mark. It was not a moment ere Gino, breathless with haste, was in chase. On reaching the bright and gay scene of the piazza, which contrasted with the gloomy court he had just quitted, like morning with night, he saw the utter fruitlessness of further pursuit. Frightened at the loss of his master's signet, however, the indiscreet but well-intentioned gondolier rushed into the crowd, and tried in vain to select the delinquent from among a thousand masks.

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"Harkee, Signor," uttered the half-distracted gondolier to one, who, having first examined his person with distrust, evidently betrayed a wish to avoid him; "if thou hast sufficiently pleased thy finger with my master's signet, the occasion offers to return it."

"I know thee not," returned a voice, in which Gino's ear could detect no familiar sound."

"It may not be well to trifle with the displeasure of a noble as powerful as him you know;" he whispered at the elbow of another, who had come under his suspicions. "The signet if thou pleasest, and the affair need go no further."

"He who would meddle in it, with or without that gage, would do well to pause."

The gondolier again turned away disappointed.

"The ring is not suited to thy masquerade, friend of mine," he essayed with a third; "and it would be wise not to trouble the podestà about such a trifle."

"Then name it not lest he hear thee." The answer proved, like all the others, unsatisfactory and bootless.

Gino now ceased to question any; but he threaded the throng with an active and eager eye. Fifty times was he tempted to speak, but as often did some difference in stature or dress, some laugh, or trifle uttered in levity, warn him of his mistake. He penetrated to the very head of the piazza, and, returning by the opposite side, he found his way through the throng of the porticos, looking into every coffee-house, and examining each figure that floated by, until he again issued into the piazzetta, without success. A slight jerk at the elbow of his jacket arrested his steps, and he turned to look at the person who had detained him. A female attired like a contadina addressed him in the feigned voice common to all.

"Whither so fast, and what hast thou lost in this merry crowd? If a heart 'twill be wise to use diligence, for many here may be willing to wear the jewel!"

"Corpo di Bacco!" exclaimed the disappointed gondolier; "any who find such a bawble of mine under foot, are welcome to their luck! Hast thou seen a domino of a size like that of any other man, with a gait that might pass for the step of a senator, a padre, or a Jew, and a mask that looks as much like a thousand of these in the square as one side of the campanile is like the other?"

"Thy picture is so well drawn, that one cannot fail to know the original. He stands beside thee."

Gino wheeled suddenly, and saw that a grinning harlequin was playing his antics in the place where he had expected to find the stranger.

"And thy eyes, bella contadina, are as dull as a mole's."

He ceased speaking, for deceived in his person, she who had saluted him was no longer visible. In this manner did the disappointed gondolier thread his way toward the water, now answering to the boisterous salute of some clown, and now repelling the advances of females less disguised than the pretended contadina, until he gained a space near the quays, where there was more room for observation. Here he paused, undetermined whether to return and confess his indiscretion to his master, or whether he should make still another effort to regain the ring which had been so sillily lost. The vacant space between the two granite columns was left to the quiet possession of himself and one other, who stood near the base of that which sustained the Lion of St. Mark, as motionless as if he too were merely a form of stone. Two or three stragglers, either led by idle curiosity, or expecting to meet one appointed to await their coming, drew near this immovable man, but all glided away, as if there were repulsion in his marble-like countenance. Gino had wituessed several instances of this evident dislike to remain near the unknown figure, ere he felt induced to cross the space between them in order to inquire into its cause. A slow movement, at the sound of his footsteps, brought the rays of the moon full upon the calm countenance and searching eye of the very man he sought.

The first impulse of the gondolier, like that of all the others he had seen approach the the spot, was to retreat; but the recollection of his errand and his loss came in season to prevent such an exhibition of his disgust and alarm. Still he did not speak; but he met the riveted gaze of the Bravo with a look

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that denoted, equally, confusion of intellect and a half-settled purpose.

"Would'st thou aught with me?" demanded Jacopo, when the gaze of each had continued beyond the term of accidental glances.

"My master's signet?"

"I know thee not."

"That image of San Teodoro could testify that this is holy truth, if it would but speak! I have not the honor of your friendship, Signor Jacopo; but one may have affairs even with a stranger. If you met a peaceable and innocent gondolier, in the court of the palace, since the clock of the piazza told the last quarter, and got from him a ring, which can be of but little use to any but its rightful owner, one so generous will not hesitate to return it."

"Dost thou take me for a jeweller of the Rialto that thou speakest to me of rings?"

"I take you for one well known and much valued by many of name and quality, here in Venice, as witness my errand from my own master."

"Remove thy mask. Men of fair dealing need nor hide the features which Nature has given them."

"You speak nothing but truths, Signor Frontoni, which is little remarkable, considering thy opportunities of looking into the motives of men. There is little in my face to pay you for the trouble of casting a glance at it. I would as lief do as others in this gay season, if it be equally agreeable to you."

"Do as thou wilt; but I pray thee to give me the same permission."

"There are few so bold as to dispute thy pleasure, Signor."

"It is, to be alone."

"Cospetto! There is not a man in Venice who would more gladly consult it, if my master's errand were fairly done!" muttered Gino, between his teeth.—"I have, here, a packet which it is my duty to put into your hands, Signor, and into those of no other."

"I know thee not—thou hast a name?"

"Not in the sense in which you speak, Signor. As to that sort of reputation, I am as nameless as a foundling."

"If thy master is of no more note than thyself, the packet may be returned."

"There are few within the dominions of St. Mark of better lineage, or of fairer hopes, than the Duke of Sunt' Agata."

The cold expression of the Bravo's countenance changed.

"If thou comest from Don Camillo Monforte, why dost thou hesitate to proclaim it?—Where are his requests?"

"I know not whether it is his pleasure, or that of another, which this paper contains, but such as it is, Signor Jacopo, my duty commands me to deliver it to thee."

The packet was received calmly, though the organ which glanced at its seal and its superscription, gleamed with an expression which the credulous gondolier fancied to resemble that of the tiger at the sight of blood.

"Thou said'st something of a ring. Dost thou bear thy master's signet? I am much accustomed to see pledges ere I give faith."

"Blessed San Teodoro grant that I did! Were it as heavy as a skin of wine I would willingly bear the load; but one that I mistook for you, Master Jacopo, has it on his own light finger, I fear."

"This is an affair that thou wilt settle with thy master," returned the Bravo, coldly, again examining the impression of the seal.

"If you are acquainted with the writing of my master," hurriedly remarked Gino, who trembled for the fate of the packet, "you will see his skill in the turn of those letters. There are few nobles in Venice, or indeed in the Sicilies, who have a more scholarly hand with a quill than Don Camillo Monforte; I could not do the thing half so well myself."

"I am no clerk," observed the Bravo, without betraying shame at the confession. "The art of deciphering a scroll, like this, was never taught me. If thou art so expert in the skill of a penman, tell the name the packet bears."

"'Twould little become me to breathe a syllable concerning any of my master's secrets," returned the gondolier, drawing himself up in sudden reserve. "It is enough that he bid me deliver the letter; after which I should think it presumption even to whisper more."

The dark eye of the Bravo was seen rolling over the person of his companion, by the light of the moon, in a manner that caused the blood of the latter to steal towards his heart.

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"I bid thee read to me aloud the name the paper bears," said Jacopo, sternly. "Here is none but the lion and the saint above our heads to listen."

"Just San Marco! who can tell what ear is open or what ear is shut in Venice? If you please, Signor Frontoni, we will postpone the examination to a more suitable occasion."

"Friend, I do not play the fool! The name, or show me some gage that thou art sent by him thou hast named, else take back the packet; 'tis no affair for my hand."

"Reflect a single moment on the consequences, Signor Jacopo, before you come to a determination so hasty."

"I know no consequences which can befall a man who refuses to receive a message like this."

"Per Diana! Signor, the Duca will not be likely to leave me an ear to hear the good advice of Father Battista."

"Then will the Duca save the public executioner some trouble."

As he spoke, the Bravo cast the packet at the feet of the gondolier, and began to walk calmly up the piazzetta. Gino seized the letter, and, with his brain in a whirl, with the effort to recall some one of his master's acquaintances to whom he would be likely to address an epistle on such an occasion, he followed.

"I wonder, Signor Jacopo, that a man of your sagacity has not remembered that a packet to be delivered to himself should bear his own name."

The Bravo took the paper, and held the superscription again to the light.

"That is not so. Though unlearned, necessity has taught me to know when I am meant."

"Diamine! That is just my own case, signor. Were the letter for me, now, the old should not know its young, quicker than I would come at the truth."

"Then thou canst not read?"

"I never pretended to the art. The little said was merely about writing. Learning, as you well understand, Master Jacopo, is divided into reading, writing, and figures; and a man may well understand one, without knowing a word of the others. It is not absolutely necessary to be a bishop to have a shaved head, or a Jew to wear a beard."

"Thou would'st have done better to have said this at once; go, I will think of the matter."

Gino gladly turned away, but he had not left the other many paces, before he saw a female form gliding behind the pedestal of one of the granite columns. Moving swiftly in a direction to uncover this seeming spy, he saw at once that Annina had been a witness of his interview with the Bravo.

CHAPTER IV.

'Twill make me think
The world is full of rubs, and that my fortune
Runs 'gainst the bias.—*Richard II.*

THOUGH Venice at that hour was so gay in her squares, the rest of the town was silent as the grave. A city in which the hoof of horse or the rolling of wheels is never heard, necessarily possesses a character of its own; but the peculiar form of the government, and the long training of the people in habits of caution, weighed on the spirits of the gay. There were times and places, it is true, when the buoyancy of youthful blood, and the levity of the thoughtless, found occasion for their display; nor were they rare; but when men found themselves removed from the temptation, and perhaps from the support of society, they appeared to imbibe the character of their sombre city.

Such was the state of most of the town, while the scene described in the previous chapter was exhibited in the lively piazza of San Marco. The moon had risen so high that its light fell between the range of walls, here and there touching the surface of the water, to which it imparted a quivering brightness, while the domes and towers rested beneath its light in a solemn but grand repose. Occasionally the front of a palace received the rays on its heavy cornices and labored columns, the gloomy stillness of the interior of the edifice furnishing, in every such instance, a striking contrast to the richness and architectural beauty without. Our narrative now leads us to one of these patrician abodes of the first class.

A heavy magnificence pervaded the style

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of the dwelling. The vestibule was vast, vaulted, and massive; the stairs, rich in marbles, heavy and grand. The apartments were imposing in their gildings and sculpture, while the walls sustained countless works on which the highest geniuses of Italy had lavishly diffused their power. Among these relics of an age more happy in this respect than that of which we write, the connoisseur would readily have known the pencils of Titian, Paul Veronese, and Tintoretto—the three great names in which the subjects of St. Mark so justly prided themselves. Among these works of the higher masters were mingled others by the pencils of Bellino, and Montegna, and Palma Vecchio — artists who were secondary only to the more renowned colorists of the Venetian school. Vast sheets of mirrors lined the walls, wherever the still more precious paintings had no place; while the ordinary hangings of velvet and silk became objects of secondary admiration, in a scene of nearly royal magnificence. The cool aud beautiful floors, made of a composition in which all the prized marbles of Italy and of the East, polished to the last degree of art, were curiously embedded, formed a suitable finish to a style so gorgeous, and in which luxury and taste were blended in equal profusion.

The building, which, on two of its sides, literally rose from out the water, was, as usual, erected around a dark court. Following its different faces, the eye might penetrate, by many a door, open at that hour for the passage of the air from off the sea, through long suites of rooms, furnished and fitted in the manner described, all lighted by shaded lamps that spread a soft and gentle glow around. Passing, without notice, ranges of reception and sleeping rooms—the latter of a magnificence to mock the ordinary wants of the body—we shall at once introduce the reader into the part of the palace where the business of the tale conducts us.

At the angle of the dwelling, on the side of the smaller of the two canals, and most remote from the principal water-avenue of the city on which the edifice fronted, there was a suite of apartments, which, while it exhibited the same style of luxury and magnificence as those first mentioned in its general character, discovered greater attention in its details to the wants of ordinary life. The hangings were of the richest velvets or of glossy silks, the mirrors were large and of exquisite truth, the floors of the same gay and pleasing colors, and the walls were adorned with their appropriate works of art. But the whole was softened down to a picture of domestic comfort. The tapestries and curtains hung in careless folds, the beds admitted of sleep, and the pictures were delicate copies by the pencil of some youthful amateur, whose leisure had been exercised in this gentle and feminine employment.

The fair being herself, whose early instruction had given birth to so many skilful imitations of the divine expression of Raphael, or of the vivid tints of Titian, was at that hour in her privacy, discoursing with her ghostly adviser, and one of her own sex, who had long discharged the joint trusts of instructor and parent. The years of the lady of the palace were so tender that, in a more northern region, she would scarcely have been deemed past the period of childhood, though, in her native land, the justness and maturity of her form, and the expression of a dark, eloquent eye, indicated both the growth and the intelligence of womanhood.

"For this good counsel, I thank you, my father, and my excellent Donna Florinda will thank you still more, for your opinions are so like her own, that I sometimes admire at the secret means by which experience enables the wise and the good to think so much alike, on a matter of so little personal interest."

A slight but furtive smile struggled around the mortified mouth of the Carmelite, as he listened to the naïve observation of his ingenuous pupil.

"Thou wilt learn, my child," he answered, "as time heaps wisdom on thy head, that it is in concerns which touch our passions and interests least, we are most apt to decide with discretion and impartiality. Though Donna Florinda is not yet past the age when the heart is finally subdued, and there is still so much to bind her to the world, she will assure thee of this truth, or I greatly mistake the excellence of that mind, which hath, hitherto, led her so far blameless, in this erring pilgrimage to which we are all doomed."

Though the cowl was over the head of the

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speaker, who was evidently preparing to depart, and his deeply-seated eye never varied from its friendly look at the fair face of her he instructed, the blood stole into the pale cheeks of the maternal companion, and her whole countenance betrayed some such reflection of feeling at his praise, as a wintry sky exhibits at a sudden gleam from the setting sun.

"I trust that Violetta does not now hear this for the first time," observed Donna Florinda, in a voice so meek and tremulous as to be observed.

"Little that can be profitably told one of my inexperience has been left untaught," quickly answered the pupil, unconscious herself that she reached her hand toward that of her constant monitor, though too intent on her object to change her look from the features of the Carmelite. "But why this desire in the senate, to dispose of a girl who would be satisfied to live forever, as she is now, happy in her youth, and contented with the privacy which becomes her sex?"

"The relentless years will not stay their advance, that even one innocent as thou may never know the unhappiness and trials of a more mature age. This life is one of imperious, and, oftentimes, of tyrannical duties. Thou art not ignorant of the policy that rules a state, which hath made its name so illustrious by high deeds in arms, its riches, and its widely spread influence. There is a law in Venice, which commandeth that none claiming an interest in its affairs shall so bind himself to the stranger as to endanger the devotion all owe to the republic. Thus may not the patrician of St. Mark be a lord in other lands, nor may the heiress of a name, great and valued as thine, be given in marriage, to any of note, in a foreign state, without counsel and consent from those who are appointed to watch over the interests of all."

"Had Providence cast my lot in an humbler class, this would not have been. Methinks it ill comports with the happiness of woman to be the especial care of the Council of Ten!"

"There is indiscretion, and I lament to say, impiety in thy words. Our duty bids us submit to earthly laws, and more than duty, reverence teaches us not to repine at the will of Providence. But I do not see the weight of this grievance, against which thou murmurest, daughter. Thou art youthful, wealthy beyond the indulgence of all healthful desires, of a lineage to excite an unwholesome worldly pride, and fair enough to render thee the most dangerous of thine own enemies—and thou repinest at a lot, to which all of thy sex and station are, of necessity, subject!"

"For the offence against Providence I am already a penitent," returned the Donna Violetta. "But surely it would be less embarrassing to a girl of sixteen, were the fathers of the state so much occupied with more weighty affairs as to forget her birth and years, and haply her wealth?"

"There would be little merit in being content with a world fashioned after our own caprices, though it may be questioned if we should be happier, by having all things as we desire, than by being compelled to submit to them as they are. The interest taken by the republic in thy particular welfare, daughter, is the price thou payest for the ease and magnificence with which thou art encircled. One more obscure, and less endowed by fortune, might have greater freedom of will, but it would be accompanied by none of the pomp which adorns the dwelling of thy fathers."

"I would there were less of luxury and more of liberty within its walls."

"Time will enable thee to see differently. At thy age all is viewed in colors of gold, or life is rendered bootless, because we are thwarted in our ill-digested wishes. I deny not, however, that thy fortune is tempered by some peculiar passages. Venice is ruled by a policy that is often calculating, and haply some deem it remorseless." Though the voice of the Carmelite had fallen, he paused, and glanced an uneasy look from beneath his cowl, ere he continued. "The caution of the senate teaches it to preclude, as far as in it lies, the union of interests that may not only oppose each other, but which may endanger those of the state. Thus, as I have said, none of senatorial rank may hold lands without the limits of the republic, nor may any of account connect themselves, by the ties of marriage, with strangers of dangerous influence, without the consent and

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supervision of the republic. The latter is thy situation, for of the several foreign lords who seek thy hand, the council see none to whom the favor may be extended, without the apprehension of creating an influence here, in the centre of the canals, which ought not to be given to a stranger. Don Camillo Monforte, the cavalier to whom thou art indebted for thy life, and of whom thou hast so lately spoken with gratitude, has far more cause to complain of these hard decrees than thou mayest have, in any reason."

"'Twould make my griefs still heavier, did I know that one who has shown so much courage in my behalf, has equal reason to feel their justice," returned Violetta, quickly. "What is the affair that, so fortunately for me, hath brought the lord of Sant' Agata to Venice, if a grateful girl may, without indiscretion, inquire?"

"Thy interest in his behalf is both natural and commendable," answered the Carmelite, with a simplicity which did more credit to his cowl than to his observation. "He is young, and, doubtless, he is tempted by the gifts of fortune, and the passions of his years, to divers acts of weakness. Remember him, daughter, in thy prayers, that part of the debt of gratitude may be repaid. His worldly interest here is one of general notoriety, and I can ascribe thy ignorance of it only to a retired manner of life."

"My charge hath other matters to occupy her thoughts than the concerns of a young stranger who cometh to Venice for affairs," mildly observed Donna Florinda.

"But if I am to remember him in my prayers, Father, it might enlighten my petition to know in what the young noble is most wanting."

"I would have thee remember his spiritual necessities only. He wanteth, of a truth, little in temporalities that the world can offer, though the desires of life often lead him who hath most in quest of more. It would seem that an ancestor of Don Camillo was anciently a senator of Venice, when the death of a relation brought many Calabrian signiories into his possession. The younger of his sons, by an especial decree, which favored a family that had well served the state, took these estates while the elder transmitted the senatorial rank and the Venetian fortunes to his posterity. Time hath extinguished the elder branch; and Don Camillo hath for years besieged the council to be restored to those rights which his predecessor renounced."

"Can they refuse him?"

"His demand involves a departure from established laws. Were he to renounce the Calabrian lordships, the Neapolitan might lose more than he would gain; and to keep both is to infringe a law that is rarely suffered to be dormant. I know little, daughter, of the interests of life; but there are enemies of the republic who say that its servitude is not easy, and that it seldom bestows favors of this sort without seeking an ample equivalent."

"Is this as it should be? If Don Camillo Monforte has claims in Venice, whether it be to palaces on the canals, or to lands on the main; to honors in the state, or voice in the senate; justice should be rendered without delay, lest it be said the republic vaunts more of the sacred quality than it practises.

"Thou speakest as guileless nature prompts. It is the frailty of man, my daughter, to separate his public acts from the fearful responsibility of his private deeds; as if God, in endowing his being with reason and the glorious hopes of Christianity, had also endowed him with two souls, of which only one was to be cared for."

"Are there not those, Father, who believe that, while the evil we commit as individuals is visited on our own persons, that which is done by states, falls on the nation?"

"The pride of human reason has invented divers subtleties to satisfy its own longings, but it can never feed itself on a delusion more fatal than this! The crime which involves others in its guilt, or consequences, is doubly a crime, and though it be a property of sin to entail its own punishment, even in our present life, he trusts to a vain hope who thinks the magnitude of the offence will ever be its apology. The chief security of our nature is to remove it beyond temptation, and he is safest from the allurements of the world who is farthest removed from its vices. Though I would wish justice done to the noble Neopolitan, it may be for his everlasting peace, that the additional wealth he seeks should be withheld."

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"I am unwilling to believe, Father, that a cavalier, who has shown himself so ready to assist the distressed, will easily abuse the gifts of fortune."

The Carmelite fastened an uneasy look on the bright features of the young Venetian. Parental solicitude and prophetic foresight were in his glance, but the expression was relieved by the charity of a chastened spirit.

"Gratitude to the preserver of thy life becomes thy station and sex; it is a duty. Cherish the feeling, for it is akin to the holy obligation of man to his Creator."

"Is it enough to feel grateful?" demanded Violetta. "One of my name and alliances might do more. We can move the patricians of my family in behalf of the stranger, that his protracted suit may come to a more speedy end."

"Daughter, beware; the intercession of one in whom St. Mark feels so lively an interest, may raise up enemies to Don Camillo instead of friends."

Donna Violetta was silent, while the monk and Donna Florinda both regarded her with affectionate concern. The former then adjusted his cowl, and prepared to depart. The noble maiden approached the Carmelite; and looking into his face with ingenuous confidence, and habitual reverence, she besought his blessing. When the solemn and customary office was performed, the monk turned towards the companion of his spiritual charge. Donna Florinda permitted the silk, on which her needle had been busy, to fall into her lap, and she sat in meek silence, while the Carmelite raised his open palms toward her bended head. His lips moved, but the words of benediction were inaudible. Had the ardent being, instrusted to their joint care, being less occupied with her own feelings, or more practised in the interests of that world into which she was about to enter, it is probable she would have detected some evidence of that deep, but smothered sympathy, which so often betrayed itself in the silent intelligence of her ghostly father and her female mentor.

"Thou wilt not forget us, Father?" said Violetta, with winning earnestness. "An orphan girl, in whose fate the sages of the republic so seriously busy themselves, has need of every friend in whom she can confide."

"Blessed be thy intercessor," said the monk, "and the peace of the innocent be with thee."

Once more he waved his hand, and, turning, he slowly quitted the room. The eye of Donna Florinda followed the white robes of the Carmelite while they where visible; and when it fell again upon the silk, it was for a moment closed, as if looking at the movements of the rebuked spirit within. The young mistress of the palace summoned a menial, and bade him do honor to her confessor, by seeing him to his gondola. She then moved to the open balcony. A long pause succeeded; it was such a silence—breathing, thoughtful, and luxurious—with the repose of Italy, as suited the city and the hour. Suddenly, Violetta receded from the open window, and withdrew a step, in alarm.

"Is there a boat beneath?" demanded her companion, whose glance was unavoidably attracted to the movement.

"The water was never more quiet. But thou hearest those strains of the hautboys?"

"Are they so rare on the canals that they drive thee from the balcony?"

"There are cavaliers beneath the windows of the Mentoni palace; doubtless they compliment our friend, Olivia."

"Even that gallantry is common. Thou knowest that Olivia is shortly to be united to her kinsman, and he takes the usual means to show his admiration."

"Dost thou not find this public announcement of a passion painful? Were I to be wooed I could wish it might only be to my own ear!"

"That is an unhappy sentiment for one whose hand is in the gift of the senate! I fear that a maiden of thy rank must be content to hear her beauty extolled and her merits sung, if not exaggerated, even by hirelings beneath a balcony."

"I would that they were done!" exclaimed Violetta, stopping her ears. "None know the excellence of our friend better than I; but this open exposure of thoughts, that ought to be so private must wound her."

"Thou mayest go again into the balcony; the music ceases."

"There are gondoliers singing near the

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Rialto: these are sounds I love! Sweet in themselves, they do no violence to our sacred feelings. Art thou for the water to-night, my Florinda?"

"Whither would'st thou?"

"I know not—but the evening is brilliant, and I pine to mingle with the splendor and pleasure without."

"While thousands on the canals pine to mingle with the splendor and pleasure within!—Thus is it ever with life: that which is possessed is little valued, and that which we have not is without price."

"I owe my duty to my guardian," said Violetta, "we will row to his palace."

Though Donna Florinda had uttered so grave a moral, she spoke without severity. Casting aside her work, she prepared to gratify the desire of her charge. It was the usual hour for the high in rank and the secluded to go abroad; and neither Venice, with its gay throngs, nor Italy, with its soft climate, ever offered greater temptation to seek the open air.

The groom of the chambers was called, the gondoliers were summoned, and the ladies, cloaking and taking their masks, were quickly in the boat.

CHAPTER V.

If your master
Would have a queen his beggar, you must tell him
That majesty, to keep decorum, must
No less beg than a kingdom.—*Antony and Cleopatra.*

The silent movement of the hearse-like gondola soon brought the fair Venetian and her female Mentor to the water-gate of the noble, who had been intrusted, by the senate, with the especial guardianship of the person of the heiress. It was a residence of more than common gloom, possessing all the solemn but stately magnificence which then characterized the private dwellings of the patricians in that city of riches and pride. Its magnitude and architecture, though rather less imposing than those which distinguished the palace of the Donna Violetta, placed it among the private edifices of the first order, and all its external decorations showed it to be the habitation of one of high importance. Within, the noiseless steps and the air of silent mistrust among the domestics, added to the gloomy grandeur of the apartments, rendered the abode no bad type of the republic itself.

As neither of his present visitors was a stranger beneath the roof of the Signor Gradenigo—for so the proprietor of the palace was called—they ascended its massive stairs, without pausing to consider any of those novelties of construction that would attract the eye of one unaccustomed to such a dwelling. The rank and the known consequence of the Donna Violetta assured her of a ready reception; and while she was ushered to the suite of rooms above, by a crowd of bowing menials, one had gone, with becoming speed, to announce her approach to his master. When in the ante-chamber, however, the ward stopped, declining to proceed any further, in deference to the convenience and privacy of her guardian. The delay was short; for no sooner was the old senator apprised of her presence, than he hastened from his closet to do her honor, with a zeal that did credit to his fitness for the trust he filled. The countenance of the old patrician—a face in which thought and care had drawn as many lines as time—lighted with unequivocal satisfaction as he pressed forward to receive his beautiful ward. To her half-uttered apologies for the intrusion, he would not listen; but as he led her within, he gallantly professed his pleasure at being honored with her visits even at moments that, to her scrupulous delicacy, might appear the most ill-timed.

"Thou canst never come amiss, child as thou art of my ancient friend, and the especial care of the state!" he added. "The gates of the Gradenigo palace would open of themselves, at the latest period of the night, to receive such a guest. Besides, the hour is most suited to the convenience of one of thy quality who would breathe the fresh evening air on the canals. Were I to limit thee to hours and minutes, some truant wish of the moment—some innocent caprice of thy sex and years, might go ungratified.—Ah! Donna Florinda, we may well pray that all our affection—not to call it weakness—for this persuasive girl, shall not in the end lead to her own disadvantage!"

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"For the indulgence of both, I am grateful," returned Violetta; "I only fear to urge my little requests at moments when your precious time is more worthily occupied in behalf of the state."

"Thou overratest my consequence. I sometimes visit the Council of Three Hundred; but my years and infirmities preclude me now from serving the republic as I could wish.—Praise be to St. Mark, our patron! its affairs are not unprosperous for our declining fortunes. We have dealt bravely with the infidel of late; the treaty with the Emperor is not to our wrong; and the anger of the Church, for the late seeming breach of confidence on our part, has been diverted. We owe some thing in the latter affair to a young Neapolitan, who sojourns here at Venice, and who is not without interest at the Holy See, by reason of his uncle, the Cardinal Secretary. Much good is done by the influence of friends, properly employed. 'Tis the secret of our success in the actual condition of Venice; for that which power cannot achieve must be trusted to favor and a wise moderation."

"Your declarations encourage me to become, once more, a suitor; for I will confess that, in addition to the desire of doing you honor, I have come, equally with the wish to urge your great influence in behalf of an earnest suit, I have."

"What now! Our young charge, Donna Florinda, has inherited, with the fortunes of her family, its ancient habits of patronage and protection! But we will not discourage the feeling, for it has a worthy origin, and used with discretion, it fortifies the noble and powerful in their stations."

"And may we not say," mildly observed Donna Florinda, "that when the affluent and happy employ themselves with the cares of the less fortunate, they not only discharge a duty, but they cultivate a wholesome and useful state of mind?"

"Doubt it not. Nothing can be more useful than to give to each class in society a proper sense of its obligations, and a just sentiment of its duties. These are opinions I greatly approve, and which I desire my ward may thoroughly understand."

"She is happy in possessing instructors so able and so willing to teach all she should know," rejoined Violetta. "With this admission, may I ask the Signor Gradenigo to give ear to my petition?"

"Thy little requests are ever welcome. I would merely observe, that generous and ardent temperaments sometimes regard a distant object so steadily as to overlook others that are not only nearer, and perhaps of still more urgent importance, but more attainable. In doing a benefit to one, we should be wary not to do injury to many. The relative of some one of thy household may have thoughtlessly enlisted for the wars?"

"Should it be so, I trust the recruit will have the manhood not to quit his colors."

"Thy nurse, who is one little likely to forget the service she did thy infancy, urges the claim of some kinsman, to an employment in the customs?"

"I believe all of that family are long since placed," said Violetta, laughing, "unless we might establish the good mother herself in some station of honor. I have naught to ask in their behalf."

"She who hath referred thee, to this goodly and healthful beauty, would prefer a well supported suit, but still is she better, as she is, indolent, and I fear, pampered by thy liberality. Thy private purse is drained by demands on thy charity; or, perhaps, the waywardness of a female taste hath cost thee dear, of late!"

"Neither.—I have little need of gold, for one of my years cannot properly maintain the magnificence of her condition. I come, guardian, with a far graver solicitation than any of these."

"I hope none, in thy favor, have been indiscreet of speech!" exclaimed the Signor Gradenigo, casting a hasty and suspicious look at his ward.

"If any have been so thoughtless, let them abide the punishment of their fault."

"I commend thy justice. In this age of novel opinions, innovations of all descriptions cannot be too severely checked. Were the senate to shut its ears to all the wild theories that are uttered by the unthinking and vain, their language would soon penetrate to the ill-regulated minds of the ignorant and idle. Ask me, if thou wilt, for purses in scores, but do not move me to forgetfulness of the guilt of the disturber of the public peace!"

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"Not a sequin.—My errand is of nobler quality."

"Speak without riddle, that I may know its object."

Now that nothing stood between her wish to speak, and her own manner of making known the request, Donna Violetta appeared to shrink from expressing it. Her color went and came, and she sought support from the eye of her attentive and wandering companion. As the latter was ignorant of her intention, however, she could do no more than encourage the supplicant, by such an expression of sympathy as woman rarely refuses to her sex, in any trial that involves their peculiar and distinctive feelings. Violetta struggled with her diffidence, and then laughing at her own want of self-possession, she continued—

"You know, Signor Gradenigo," she said with a loftiness that was not less puzzling, though far more intelligible, than the agitation which, a moment before, had embarrassed her manner, "that I am the last of a line, eminent for centuries, in the state of Venice."

"So sayeth our history."

"That I bear a name long known, and which it becomes me to shield from all imputation of discredit, in my own person."

"This is so true, that it scarcely needed so clear an exposure," drily returned the senator.

"And that, though thus gifted by the accidents of fortune and birth, I have received a boon that still remains unrequited, in a manner to do no honor to the house of Thiepolo."

"This becometh serious! Donna Florinda, our ward is more earnest than intelligible, and I must ask an explanation at your hands. It becometh her not to receive boons of this nature from any."

"Though unprepared for this request," mildly replied the companion, "I think she speaks of the boon of life."

The Signor Gradenigo's countenance assumed a dark expression.

"I understand you," he said coldly. "It is true that the Neapolitan was ready to rescue thee, when the calamity befell thy uncle of Florence, but Don Camillo Monforte is not a common diver of the Lido, to be rewarded like him who finds a bawble dropped from a gondola. Thou hast thanked the cavalier; I trust that a noble maiden can do no more in a case like this."

"That I have thanked him, and thanked him from my soul, is true!" fervently exclaimed Violetta. "When I forget the service, Maria Santissima, and the good saints, forget me!"

"I doubt, Signora Florinda, that your charge hath spent more hours among the light works of her late father's library, and less time with her missal, than becomes her birth?"

The eye of Violetta kindled, and she folded an arm around the form of her shrinking companion, who drew down her veil at this reproof, though she forbore to answer.

"Signor Gradenigo," said the young heiress, "I may have done discredit to my instructors, but if the pupil has been idle, the fault should not be visited on the innocent. It is some evidence that the commands of holy church have not been neglected, that I now come to entreat favor in behalf of one, to whom I owe my life. Don Camilla Monforte has long pursued, without success, a claim so just, that were there no other motive to concede it, the character of Venice should teach the senators the danger of delay."

"My ward has spent her leisure with the doctors of Padua! The republic hath its laws, and none who have right on their side appealed to them in vain. Thy gratitude is not to be censured; it is rather worthy of thy origin and hopes; still, Donna Violetta, we should remember how difficult it is to winnow the truth from the chaff of imposition and legal subtlety, and, most of all, should a judge be certain, before he give his decree, that, in confirming the claims of one applicant, he does not defeat those of another."

"They tamper with his rights! Being born in a foreign realm, he is required to renounce more in the land of the stranger than he will gain within the limits of the republic. He wastes life and youth in pursuing a phantom! You are of weight in the senate, my guardian, and were you to lend him the support of your powerful voice and great instruction, a wronged noble would have justice, and Venice, though she might lose a trifle from her stores, would better deserve the character of which she is so jealous."

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"Thou art a persuasive advocate, and I will think of what thou urgest," said the Signor Gradenigo, changing the frown, which had been gathering about his brow, to a look of indulgence, with a facility that betrayed much practice in adapting the expression of his features to his policy. "I ought only to hearken to the Neapolitan, in my public character of a judge; but his service to thee and my weakness in thy behalf, extorts that thou would'st have."

Donna Violetta received the promise with a bright and guileless smile. She kissed the hand he extended, as a pledge of his faith, with a fervor that gave her attentive guardian serious uneasiness.

"Thou art too winning, even to be resisted by one wearied with rebutting plausible pretensions," he added. "The young and the generous, Donna Florinda, believe all to be as their own wishes and simplicity would have them. As for this right of Don Camillo —but no matter—thou wilt have it so, and it shall be examined with that blindness which is said to be the failing of justice."

"I have understood the metaphor to mean blind to favor, but not insensible to the right."

"I fear that is a sense which might defeat our hopes—but we will look into it. My son has been mindful of his duty and respect of late, Donna Violetta, as I would have him? The boy wants little urging, I know, to lead him to do honor to my ward, and the fairest of Venice. Thou wilt receive him with friendship, for the love thou bearest his father?"

Donna Violetta courtesied, but it was with womanly reserve.

"The door of my palace is never shut on the Signor Giacomo on all proper occasions," she said, coldly. "Signor, the son of my guardian could hardly be other than an honored visitor."

"I would have the boy attentive—and even more, I would have him prove some little of that great esteem,——but we live in a jealous city, Donna Florinda, and one in which prudence is a virtue of the highest price. If the youth is less urgent than I could wish, believe me, it is from the apprehension of giving premature alarm to those who interest themselves in the fortunes of our charge."

Both the ladies bowed, and by the manner in which they drew their cloaks about them, they made evident their wish to retire. Donna Violetta craved a blessing, and after the usual compliments, and a short dialogue of courtesy, she and her companion withdrew to their boat.

The Signor Gradenigo paced the room, in which he had received his ward, for several minutes in silence. Not a sound of any sort was audible throughout the whole of the vast abode, the stillness and cautious tread of those within, answering to the quiet town without; but a young man, in whose countenance and air were to be seen most of the usual signs of a well-bred profligacy, sauntering along the suite of chambers, at length caught the eye of the senator, who beckoned him to approach.

"Thou art unhappy, as of wont, Giacomo," he said, in a tone between paternal indulgence and reproach. "The Donna Violetta has, but a minute since, departed, and thou wert absent. Some unworthy intrigue with the daughter of a jeweller, or some more injurious bargain of thy hopes, with the father, hath occupied the time that might have been devoted more honorably, and to far better profit."

"You do me little justice," returned the youth. "Neither Jews, nor Jewess, hath this day greeted my eye."

"The calendar should mark the time for its singularity! I would know, Giacomo, if thou turnest to a right advantage the occasion of my guardianship, and if thou thinkest, with sufficient gravity, of the importance of what I urge?"

"Doubt it not, father. He who hath so much suffered for the want of that which the Donna Violetta possesses in so great profusion, needeth little prompting on such a subject. By refusing to supply my wants, you have made certain of my consent. There is not a fool in Venice who sighs more loudly beneath his mistress's window, than I utter my pathetic wishes to the lady—when there is opportunity, and I am in the humor."

"Thou knowest the danger of alarming the senate?"

"Fear me not. My progress is by secret and gradual means. Neither my countenance nor my mind is unused to a mask—thanks to necessity! My spirits have been

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too buoyant not to have made me acquainted with duplicity!"

"Thou speakest, ungrateful boy, as if I denied thy youth the usual indulgences of thy years and rank. It is thy excesses, and not thy spirits, I would check. But I would not now harden thee with reproof. Giacomo, thou hast a rival in the stranger. His act in the Giudecca has won upon the fancy of the girl, and like all of generous and ardent natures, ignorant as she is of his merits, she supplies his character with all necessary qualities by her own ingenuity."

"I would she did the same by me!"

"With thee, sirrah, my ward might be required to forget, rather than invent. Hast thou bethought thee of turning the eyes of the council on the danger which besets their heiress?"

"I have."

"And the means?"

"The plainest and the most certain—the Lion's mouth."

"Ha!—that, indeed, is a bold adventure."

"And, like all bold adventures, it is the more likely to succeed. For once Fortune hath not been a niggard with me.—I have given them the Neapolitan's signet by way of proof."

"Giacomo! dost thou know the hazard of thy temerity? I hope there is no clew left in the handwriting, or by any other means taken to obtain the ring?"

"Father, though I may have overlooked thy instruction in less weighty matters, not an admonition which touches the policy of Venice hath been forgotten. The Neapolitan stands accused, and if thy Council is faithful, he will be a suspected, if not a banished, man."

"That the Council of Three will perform its trust is beyond dispute. I would I were as certain that thy indiscreet zeal may not lead to some unpleasant exposure!"

The shameless son stared at the father a moment in doubt, and then he passed into the more private parts of the palace, like one too much accustomed to double-dealing to lend it a second or a serious thought. The senator remained. His silent walk was now manifestly disturbed by great uneasiness; and he frequently passed a hand across his brow, as if he mused in pain. While thus occupied, a figure stole through the long suite of ante-chambers, and stopped near the door of the room he occupied. The intruder was aged; his face was tawny by exposure, and his hair thinned and whitened by time. His dress was that of a fisherman, being both scanty and of the meanest materials. Still there was a naturally noble and frank intelligence in his bold eye and prominent features, while the bare arms and naked legs exhibited a muscle and proportion which proved that nature was rather at a stand than in the decline. He had been many moments dangling his cap, in habitual but unembarrassed respect, before his presence was observed.

"Ha! thou here, Antonio!" exclaimed the senator, when their eyes met. "Why this visit?"

"Signor, my heart is heavy."

"Hath the calendar no saint—the fisherman no patron? I suppose the sirocco hath been tossing the waters of the bay, and thy nets are empty.—Hold! thou art my foster-brother, and thou must not want."

The fisherman drew back with dignity, refusing the gift simply, but decidedly, by the act.

"Signor, we have lived from childhood to old age since we drew our milk from the same breast; in all that time have you ever known me a beggar?"

"Thou art not wont to ask these boons, Antonio, it is true; but age conquers our pride with our strength. If it be not sequins that thou seekest, what would'st thou?"

"There are other wants than those of the body, Signor, and other sufferings besides hunger."

The countenance of the senator lowered. He cast a sharp glance at his foster-brother, and ere he answered he closed the door which communicated with the outer chamber.

"Thy words forebode disaffection, as of wont. Thou art accustomed to comment on measures and interests that are beyond thy limited reason, and thou knowest that thy opinions have already drawn displeasure on thee. The ignorant and the low are, to the state, as children, whose duty it is to obey and not to cavil.—Thy errand?"

"I am not the man you think me, Signor. I am used to poverty and want, and little satisfies my wishes. The senate is my mas-

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ter, and as such I honor it; but a fisherman hath his feelings as well as the Doge!"

"Again!—These feelings of thine, Antonio, are most exacting. Thou namest them on all occasions, as if they were the engrossing concerns of life."

"Signor, are they not to me? Though I think mostly of my own concerns, still I can have a thought for the distress of those I honor. When the beautiful and youthful lady, your eccellenza's daughter, was called away to the company of the saints, I felt the blow as if it had been the death of my own child; and it has pleased God, as you very well know, Signor, not to leave me unacquainted with the anguish of such a loss."

"Thou art a good fellow, Antonio," returned the senator, covertly removing the moisture from his eyes; "an honest and a proud man, for thy condition!"

"She, from whom we both drew our first nourishment, Signor, often told me that, next to my own kin, it was my duty to love the noble race she had helped to support. I make no merit of natural feeling, which is a gift from Heaven, and the greater is the reason that the state should not deal lightly with such affections."

"Once more the state!—Name thy errand."

"Your eccellenza knows the history of my humble life. I need not tell you, Signor, of the sons which God, by the intercession of the Virgin and blessed St. Anthony, was pleased to bestow on me, or of the manner in which he hath seen proper to take them, one by one, away."

"Thou hast known sorrow, poor Antonio! I well remember thou hast suffered too."

"Signor, I have. The deaths of five manly and honest sons is a blow to bring a groan from a rock. But I have known how to bless God and be thankful!"

"Worthy fisherman, the Doge himself might envy this resignation. It is often easier to endure the loss than the life of a child, Antonio!"

"Signor, no boy of mine ever caused me grief, but the hour in which he died. And even then," the old man turned aside, to conceal the working of his features—"I struggled to remember, from how much pain, and toil, and suffering, they were removed to enjoy a more blessed state."

The lip of the Signor Gradenigo quivered, and he moved to and fro with a quicker step.

"I think, Antonio," he said, "I think, honest Antonio, I had masses said for the souls of them all?"

"Signor, you had; St. Anthony remember the kindness in your own extremity! I was wrong in saying that the youths never gave me sorrow but in dying, for there is a pain the rich cannot know, in being too poor to buy a prayer for a dead child!"

"Wilt thou have more masses? Son of thine shall never want a voice with the saints, for the ease of his soul!"

"I thank you, eccellenza, but I have faith in what has been done, and, more than all, in the mercy of God. My errand now is in behalf of the living."

The sympathy of the senator was suddenly checked, and he already listened with a doubting and suspicious air.

"Thy errand?" he simply repeated.

"Is to beg your interest, Signor, to obtain the release of my grandson from the galleys. They have seized the lad in his fourteenth year, and condemned him to the wars with the Infidels, without thought of his tender years, without thought of evil example, without thought of my age and loneliness, and without justice; for his father died in the last battle given to the Turk."

As he ceased, the fisherman riveted his look on the marble countenance of his auditor, wistfully endeavoring to trace the effect of his words. But all there was cold, unanswering and void of human sympathy. The soulless, practised, and specious reasoning of the state, had long since deadened all feeling in the senator, on any subject that touched an interest so vital as the maritime power of the republic. He saw the hazard of innovation in the slightest approach to interests so delicate, and his mind was drilled by policy into an apathy that no charity could disturb, when there was question of the right of St. Mark to the services of his people.

"I would thou hadst come to beg masses, or gold, or aught but this, Antonio!" he answered, after a moment of delay. "Thou hast had the company of the boy, if I remember, from his birth, already?"

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"Signor, I have had that satisfaction, for he was an orphan born; and I would wish to have it until the child is fit to go into the world, armed with an honesty and faith that shall keep him from harm. Were my own brave son here, he would ask no other fortune for the lad than such counsel and aid as a poor man has a right to bestow on his own flesh and blood."

"He fareth no worse than others; and thou knowest that the republic hath need of every arm."

"Eccellenza, I saw the Signor Giacomo land from his gondola, as I entered the palace."

"Out upon thee, fellow! dost thou make no distinction between the son of a fisherman, one trained to the oar and toil, and the heir of an ancient house? Go to, presuming man, and remember thy condition, and the difference that God hath made between our children."

"Mine never gave me sorrow, but the hour in which they died," said the fisherman, uttering a severe but mild reproof.

The Signor Gradenigo felt the sting of this retort, which in no degree aided the cause of his indiscreet foster-brother. After pacing the room in agitation for some time, he so far conquered his resentment, as to answer more mildly, as became his rank.

"Antonio," he said, "thy disposition and boldness are not strangers to me—if thou would'st have masses for the dead, or gold for the living, they are thine; but in asking for my interest with the general of the galleys, thou askest that which, at a moment so critical, could not be yielded to the son of the Doge, were the Doge——"

"A fisherman," continued Antonio, observing that he hesitated—"Signor, adieu; I would not part in anger with my foster-brother, and I pray the saints to bless you and your house. May you never know the grief of losing a child by a fate far worse than death—that of destruction by vice."

As Antonio ceased, he made his reverence and departed by the way he had entered. He retired unnoticed, for the senator averted his eyes, with a secret consciousness of the force of what the other, in his simplicity, had uttered; and it was some time before the latter knew he was alone. Another step, however, soon diverted his attention. The door reopened, and a menial appeared. He announced that one without sought a private audience.

"Let him enter," answered the ready senator, smoothing his features to the customary cautious and distrustful expression.

The servant withdrew, when one masked, and wearing a cloak, quickly entered the room. When the latter instrument of disguise was thrown upon an arm, and the visor was removed, the form and face of the dreaded Jacopo became visible.

CHAPTER VI.

Cæsar himself has work, and our oppression
Exceeds what we expected.—SHAKESPEARE.

"DIDST thou note him that left me?" eagerly demanded the Signor Gradenigo.

"I did."

"Enough so to recognize form and countenance?"

"'Twas a fisherman of the Lagunes, named Antonio."

The senator dropped the extended limb, and regarded the Bravo, with a look in which surprise and admiration were equally blended. He resumed his course up and down the room, while his companion stood waiting his pleasure, in an attitude so calm as to be dignified. A few minutes were wasted in this abstraction.

"Thou art quick of sight, Jacopo!" continued the patrician, breaking the pause—"Hast thou had dealings with the man?"

"Never!"

"Thou art certain it is——"

"Your eccellenza's foster-brother."

"I did not inquire into thy knowledge of his infancy and origin, but of his present state," returned the Signor Gradenigo, turning away to conceal his countenance from the glowing eye of Jacopo—"Has he been named to thee by any in authority?"

"He has not—my mission does not lie with fishermen."

"Duty may lead us into still humbler society, young man. They who are charged with the grievous burden of the state must

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not consider the quality of the load they carry. In what manner hath this Antonio come to thy knowledge?"

"I have known him as one esteemed by his fellows—a man skilful in his craft, and long practised in the mystery of the Lagunes."

"He is a defaulter of the revenue, thou would'st be understood to say?"

"I would not. He toils too late and early to have other means of support than labor."

"Thou knowest, Jacopo, the severity of our laws in matters that concern the public moneys?"

"I know that the judgment of St. Mark, Signor, is never light when its own interest is touched."

"Thou art not required to utter opinions beyond the present question. This man hath a habit of courting the good-will of his associates, and of making his voice heard concerning affairs of which none but his superiors may discreetly judge."

"Signor, he is old, and the tongue grows loose with years."

"This is not the character of Antonio. Nature hath not treated him unkindly; had his birth and education been equal to his mind, the senate might have been glad to listen—as it is, I fear he speaks in a sense to endanger his own interests."

"Surely, if he speaks to offend the ear of St. Mark."

There was a quick suspicious glance from the senator to the Bravo, as if to read the true meaning of the latter's words. Finding, however, the same expression of self-possession in the quiet features he scrutinized, the latter continued as if distrust had not been awakened.

"If, as thou sayest, he so speaks as to injure the republic, his years have not brought discretion. I love the man, Jacopo, for it is usual to regard, with some partiality, those who have drawn nourishment from the same breast with ourselves."

"Signor, it is."

"And feeling this weakness in his favor, I would have him admonished to be prudent. Thou art acquainted, doubtless, with his opinions concerning the recent necessity of the state, to command the services of all the youths on the Lagunes in her fleets?"

"I know that the press has taken from him the boy who toiled in his company."

"To toil honorably, and perhaps gainfully, in behalf of the republic!"

"Signor, perhaps!"

"Thou art brief in thy speech to-night, Jacopo!—But if thou knowest the fisherman, give him counsel of discretion. St. Mark will not tolerate such free opinions of his wisdom. This is the third occasion in which there has been need to repress that fisherman's speech; for the paternal care of the senate cannot see discontent planted in the bosom of a class it is their duty and pleasure to render happy. Seek opportunities to let him hear this wholesome truth, for in good sooth I would not willingly see a misfortune light upon the head of a son of my ancient nurse, and that, too, in the decline of his days."

The Bravo bent his body in acquiescence, while the Signor Gradenigo paced the room, in a manner to show that he really felt concern.

"Thou hast had advice of the judgment, in the matter of the Genoese?" resumed the latter, when another pause had given time to change the current of his thoughts. "The sentence of the tribunals has been prompt, and, though there is much assumption of a dislike between the two republics, the world can now see how sternly justice is consulted on our isles. I hear the Genoese will have ample amends, and that certain of our own citizens will be mulcted of much money."

"I have heard the same since the sun set, in the Piazzetta, Signor!"

"And do men converse of our impartiality, and more than all of our promptitude? Bethink thee, Jacopo, 'tis but a se'nnight since the claim was preferred to the senate's equity!"

"None dispute the promptitude with which the republic visits offences."

"Nor the justice, I trust also, good Jacopo. There is a beauty and a harmony in the manner in which the social machine rolls on its course, under such a system, that should secure men's applause! Justice administers to the wants of society, and checks the passions with a force as silent and dignified, as if her decrees came from a higher volition.

I often compare the quiet march of the state, contrasted with the troubled movements of some other of our Italian sisters, to the difference between the clatter of a clamorous town, and the stillness of our own noiseless canals. Then the uprightness of the late decree is in the mouths of the masquers to-night?"

"Signore, the Venetians are bold when there is an opportunity to praise their masters."

"Dost thou think thus, Jacopo! To me they have ever seemed more prone to vent their seditious discontent. But 'tis the nature of man to be niggardly of praise and lavish of censure. This decree of the tribunal must not be suffered to die, with the mere justice of the case. Our friends should dwell on it, openly, in the cafés, and at the Lido. They will have no cause to fear, should they give their tongues a little latitude. A just government hath no jealousy of comment."

"True, Signor."

"I look to thee and thy fellows to see that the affair be not too quickly forgotten. The contemplation of acts, such as this, will quicken the dormant seeds of virtue in the public mind. He who has examples of equity incessantly before his eyes, will come at last to love the quality. The Genoese, I trust, will depart satisfied?"

"Doubt it not, Signor; he has all that can content a sufferer; his own with usury, and revenge of him who did the wrong."

"Such is the decree—ample restoration and the chastening hand of punishment. Few states would thus render a judgment against itself, Jacopo!"

"Is the state answerable for the deed of the merchant, Signore?"

"Through its citizen. He who inflicts punishment on his own members, is a sufferer, surely. No one can part with his own flesh without pain; is not this true, fellow?"

"There are nerves that are delicate to the touch, Signor, and an eye or a tooth is precious; but the paring of a nail, or the fall of the beard, is little heeded."

"One who did not know thee, Jacopo, would imagine thee in the interest of the emperor! The sparrow does not fall in Venice, without the loss touching the parental feelings of the senate. Well, is there further rumor among the Jews, of a decrease of gold? Sequins are not so abundant as of wont, and the chicanery of that race lends itself to the scarcity, in the hope of larger profits."

"I have seen faces on the Rialto, of late, Signor, that look empty purses. The Christian seems anxious, and in want, while the unbelievers wear their gaberdines with a looser air than is usual."

"This hath been expected. Doth report openly name any of the Israelites who are in the custom of lending, on usury, to the young nobles?"

"All, who have to lend, may be accounted of the class; the whole synagogue, rabbis and all, are of a mind, when there is question of a Christian's purse."

"Thou likest not the Hebrew, Jacopo; but he is of good service in the republic's straits. We count all friends, who are ready with their gold at need. Still the young hopes of Venice must not be left to waste their substance in unwary bargains with the gainful race, and should'st thou hear of any of mark, who are thought to be too deeply in their clutches, thou wilt do wisely to let the same be known, with little delay, to the guardians of the public weal. We must deal tenderly with those who prop to state, but we must also deal discreetly with those who will shortly compose it. Hast thou aught to say in the matter?"

"I have heard men speak of Signor Giacomo as paying dearest for their favors."

"Gesu Maria! my son and heir! Dost thou not deceive me, man, to gratify thine own displeasure against the Hebrews?"

"I have no other malice against the race, signor, than the wholesome disrelish of a Christian. Thus much I hope may be permitted to a believer, but beyond that, in reason, I carry hatred to no man. It is well known that your heir is disposing freely of his hopes, and at prices that lower expectations might command."

"This is a weighty concern! The boy must be speedily admonished of the consequences, and care must be had for his future discretion. The Hebrew shall be punished, and as a solemn warning to the whole tribe, the debt confiscated to the benefit of the borrower. With such an example before

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their eyes, the knaves will be less ready with their sequins. Holy St. Theodore! 'twere self-destruction to suffer one of such promise to be lost for the want of prudent forethought. I will charge myself with the matter as an especial duty, and the senate shall have no cause to say that its interests have been neglected. Hast thou had applications of late, in thy character of avenger of private wrongs?"

"None of note—there is one that seeks me earnestly, though I am not yet wholly the master of his wishes."

"Thy office is of much delicacy and trust, and as thou art well assured, the reward is weighty and sure." The eyes of the Bravo kindled with an expression which caused his companion to pause. But observing that the repose, for which the features of Jacopo were so remarkable, again presided over his pallid face, he continued, as if there had been no interruption: "I repeat, the bounty and clemency of the state will not be forgotten. If its justice is stern and infallible, its forgiveness is cordial, and its favors ample. Of these facts I have taken much pains to assure thee, Jacopo.—Blessed St. Mark! that one of the scions of thy great stock should waste his substance for the benefit of a race of unbelievers! But thou hast not named him who seeks thee, with this earnestness?"

"As I have yet to learn his errand, before I go further, signor, it may be well to know more of his wishes."

"This reserve is uncalled for. Thou art not to distrust the prudence of the republic's ministers, and I should be sorry were the Inquisitors to get an unfavorable opinion of thy zeal. The individual must be denounced."

"I denounce him not. The most that I can say is, that he hath a desire to deal privately with one, with whom it is almost criminal to deal at all."

"The prevention of crime is better than its punishment, and such is the true object of all government. Thou wilt not withhold the name of thy correspondent?"

"It is a noble Neapolitan, who hath long sojourned in Venice, on matters touching a great succession, and some right, even, to the senate's dignity."

"Ha! Don Camillo Monforte! Am I right, sirrah?"

"Signor, the same!"

The pause which followed was only broken by the clock of the great square striking eleven, or the fourth hour of the night, as it is termed, by the usage of Italy. The senator started, consulted a time-piece in his own apartment, and again addressed his companion.

"This is well," he said; "thy faith and punctuality shall be remembered. Look to the fisherman, Antonio; the murmurs of the old man must not be permitted to awaken discontent, for a cause so trifling as this transfer of his descendant from a gondola to a galley; and most of all, keep thy ears attentive to any rumors on the Rialto. The glory and credit of a patrician name must not be weakened by the errors of boyhood. As to this stranger—quickly, thy mask and cloak—depart as if thou wert merely a friend bent on some of the idle pleasantries of the hour."

The Bravo resumed his disguise with the readiness of one long practised in its use, but with a composure that was not so easily disconcerted as that of the more sensitive senator. The latter did not speak again, though he hurried Jacopo from his presence, by an impatient movement of the hand.

When the door was closed and the Signor Gradenigo was again alone, he once more consulted the time-piece, passed his hand slowly and thoughtfully across his brow, and resumed his walk. For nearly an hour this exercise, or nervous sympathy of the body with a mind that was possibly overworked, continued without any interruption from without. Then came a gentle tap at the door, and at the usual bidding, one entered, closely masked, like him who had departed, as was so much the usage of that city, in the age of which we write. A glance at the figure of his guest seemed to apprise the senator of his character, for the reception, while it was distinguished by the quaint courtesy of the age, was that of one expected.

"I am honored in the visit of Don Camillo Monforte," said the host, while the individual named laid aside his cloak and silken visor; "though the lateness of the hour had given me reason to apprehend that some casualty had interfered between me and the pleasure."

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"A thousand excuses, noble senator, but the coolness of the canals, and the gaiety of the square, together with some apprehension of intruding prematurely on time so precious, has, I fear, kept me out of season. But I trust to the known goodness of the Signor Gradenigo for my apology."

"The punctuality of the great lords of Lower Italy is not their greatest merit," the Signor Gradenigo drily answered. "The young esteem life so endless, that they take little heed of the minutes that escape them; while we, whom age begins to menace, think chiefly of repairing the omissions of youth. In this manner, Signor Duca, does man sin and repent daily, until the opportunities of doing either are imperceptibly lost. But we will not be more prodigal of the moments than there is need—are we to hope for better views in the Spaniard?"

"I have neglected little that can move the mind of a reasonable man, and I have, in particular, laid before him the advantage of conciliating the senate's esteem."

"Therein have you done wisely, signor, both as respects his interests and your own. The senate is a liberal paymaster to him who serves it well, and a fearful enemy to those who do harm to the state. I hope the matter of the succession draws near a conclusion?"

"I wish it were possible to say it did. I urge the tribunal in all proper assiduity, omitting no duty of personal respect, nor of private solicitation. Padua has not a doctor more learned than he who presents my right to their wisdom, and yet the affair lingers like life in the hectic. If I have not shown myself a worthy son of St. Mark, in this affair with the Spaniard, it is more from the want of a habit of managing political interests, than from any want of zeal."

"The scales of justice must be nicely balanced to hang so long, without determining to one side or the other! You will have need of further assiduity, Don Camillo, and of great discretion in disposing the minds of the patricians in your favor. It will be well to make your attachment to the state be observed, by further service near the ambassador. You are known to have his esteem, and counsel coming from such a quarter will enter deeply into his mind. It should also quicken the exertions of so benevolent and generous a young spirit, to know that in serving his country, he also aids the cause of humanity."

Don Camillo did not appear to be strongly impressed with the justice of the latter remark. He bowed, however, in courtesy to his companion's opinion.

"It is pleasant, signor, to be thus persuaded," he answered; "my kinsman of Castile is a man to hear reason, let it come from what quarter it may. Though he meets my arguments with some allusions to the declining power of the republic, I do not see less of deep respect for the influence of a state that hath long made itself remarkable by its energy and will."

"Venice is no longer what the city of the Isles hath been, Signor Duca; still is she not powerless. The wings of our lion are a little clipped, but his leap is still far, and his teeth dangerous. If the new-made prince would have his ducal coronet sit easily on his brow, he would do well to secure the esteem of his nearest neighbors."

"This is obviously true, and little that my influence can do toward effecting the object, shall be wanting. And now, may I entreat of your friendship, advice as to the manner of further urging my own long-neglected claims?"

"You will do well, Don Camillo, to remind the senators of your presence, by frequent observance of the courtesies due to their rank and yours."

"This do I never neglect, as seemly both in my station and my object."

"The judges should not be forgotten, young man, for it is wise to remember that justice hath ever an ear for solicitation."

"None can be more assiduous in the duty, nor is it common to see a suppliant so mindful of those whom he troubleth, by more substantial proofs of respect."

"But chiefly should you be particular to earn the senate's esteem. No act of service to the state is overlooked by that body, and the smallest good deed finds its way into the recesses of the two councils."

"Would I could have communication with those reverend fathers! I think the justice of my claim would speedily work out its own right."

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"That were impossible!" gravely returned the senator. "Those august bodies are secret, that their majesty may not be tarnished by communication with vulgar interests. They rule like the unseen influence of mind over matter, and form as it were the soul of the state whose seat, like that of reason, remains a problem exceeding human penetration."

"I express the desire, rather as a wish than with any hope of its being granted," returned the Duke of St. Agata, resuming his cloak and mask, neither of which had been entirely laid aside. "Adieu, noble Signor; I shall not cease to move the Castilian with frequent advice, and, in return, I commit my affair to the justice of the patricians, and your own good friendship."

Signor Gradenigo bowed his guest through all the rooms of the long suit, but the last, where he committed him to the care of the groom of his chambers.

"The youth must be stirred to greater industry in this matter, by clogging the wheels of the law. He that would ask favors of St. Mark must first earn them, by showing zealous dispositions in his behalf."

Such were the reflections of the Signor Gradenigo, as he slowly returned toward his closet, after a ceremonious leave-taking with his guest in the outer apartment. Closing the door, he commenced pacing the small apartment with the step and eye of a man who again mused with some anxiety. After a minute of profound stillness, a door, concealed by the hangings of the room, was cautiously opened, and the face of still another visitor appeared.

"Enter!" said the senator, betraying no surprise at the apparition; "the hour is past, and I wait for thee."

The flowing dress, the gray and venerable beard, the noble outline of features, the quick, greedy, and suspicious eye, with an expression of countenance that was, perhaps, equally marked by worldly sagacity, and feelings often rudely rebuked, proclaimed a Hebrew of the Rialto.

"Enter, Hosea, and unburden thyself," continued the senator, like one prepared for some habitual communication. "Is there aught new that touches the public weal?"

"Blessed is the people over whom there is so fatherly a care! Can there be good or evil to the citizen of the republic, noble Signor, without the bowels of the senate moving, as the parent yearneth over its young? Happy is the country in which men of reverend years and whitened heads watch, until night draws toward the day, and weariness is forgotten in the desire to do good, and to honor the state!"

"Thy mind partaketh of the eastern imagery of the country of thy fathers, good Hosea, and thou art apt to forget that thou art not yet watching on the steps of the temple. What of interest hath the day brought forth?"

"Say rather of the night, Signor, for little worthy of your ear hath happened, save a matter of some trifling import, which hath grown out of the movements of the evening."

"Have there been stilettoes busy on the bridge?—ha!—or do the people joy less than common in their levities?"

"None have died wrongfully, and the square is gay as the fragrant vineyards of Engedi. Holy Abraham! what a place is Venice for its pleasures, and how the hearts of old and young revel in their merriment! It is almost sufficient to fix the font in the synagogue, to witness so joyous a dispensation in behalf of the people of these islands! I had not hoped for the honor of an interview to-night, Signor, and I had prayed, before laying my head upon the pillow, when one charged by the council brought to me a jewel, with an order to decipher the arms and other symbols of its owner. 'Tis a ring, with the usual marks, which accompany private confidences."

"Thou hast the signet?" said the noble, stretching out an arm.

"It is here, and a goodly stone it is; a turquoise of price."

"Whence came it—and why is it sent to thee?"

"It came, signor, as I gather more through hints and intimations of the messenger than by his words, from a place resembling that which the righteous Daniel escaped, in virtue of his godliness and birth."

"Thou meanest the Lion's Mouth?"

"So say our ancient books, signor, in reference to the prophet, and so would the council's agent seem to intimate, in reference to the ring."

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"Here is naught but a crest with the equestrian helmet—comes it of any in Venice?"

"The upright Solomon guide the judgment of his servant in a matter of this delicacy! The jewel is of rare beauty, such as few possess but those who have gold in store for other purposes. Do but regard the soft lustre in this light, noble signor, and remark the pleasing colors that rise by the change of view!"

"Ay—'tis well—but who claimeth the bearings?"

"It is wonderful to contemplate how great a value may lie concealed in so small a compass! I have known sequins of full weight and heavy amount given for bawbles less precious."

"Wilt thou never forget thy stall and the wayfarers of the Rialto? I bid thee name him who beareth these symbols as marks of his family and rank."

"Noble signor, I obey. The crest is of the family of Monforte, the last senator of which died some fifteen years since."

"And his jewels?"

"They have passed, with other movables of which the state taketh no account, into the keeping of his kinsman and successor—if it be the senate's pleasure that there shall be a successor to that ancient name—Don Camillo of Sant' Agata. The wealthy Neapolitan who now urges his rights here in Venice, is the present owner of this precious stone."

"Give me the ring; this must be looked to—hast thou more to say?"

"Nothing, signor—unless to petition, if there is to be any condemnation and sale of the jewel, that it may first be offered to an ancient servitor of the republic, who hath much reason to regret that his age hath been less prosperous than his youth."

"Thou shalt not be forgotten. I hear it said, Hosea, that divers of our young nobles frequent thy Hebrew shops with intent to borrow gold, which, lavished in present prodigality, is to be bitterly repaid at a later day by self-denial, and such embarrassments as suit not the heirs of noble names. Take heed of this matter—for if the displeasure of the council should alight on any of thy race, there would be long and serious accounts to settle! Hast thou had employment of late with other signets, besides this of the Neapolitan?"

"Unless in the vulgar way of our daily occupation, none of note, illustrious signor."

"Regard this," continued the Signor Gradenigo, first searching in a secret drawer, whence he drew a small bit of paper, to which a morsel of wax adhered; "canst thou form any conjecture, by the impression, concerning him who used that seal?"

The jeweler took the paper and held it toward the light, while his glittering eyes intently examined the conceit.

"This would surpass the wisdom of the son of David!" he said, after a long and seemingly a fruitless examination; "here is naught but some fanciful device of gallantry, such as the light-hearted cavaliers of the city are fond of using, when they tempt the weaker sex with fair words and seductive vanities."

"It is a heart pierced with the dart of love, and a motto of '*pensa al cuore trafitto d' amore.*'"

"Naught else, as my eyes do their duty. I should think there was but very little meant by those words, signor!"

"That as may be. Thou hast never sold a jewel with that conceit!"

"Just Samuel! We dispose of them daily, to Christians of both sexes and all ages. I know no device of greater frequency, whereby I conceive there is much commerce in this light fidelity."

"He who used it did well in concealing his thoughts beneath so general a dress! There will be a reward of a hundred sequins to him who traces the owner."

Hosea was about to return the seal as beyond his knowledge, when this remark fell casually from the lips of the Signor Gradenigo. In a moment his eyes were fortified with a glass of microscopic power, and the paper was again before the lamp.

"I disposed of a cornelian of no great price, which bore this conceit, to the wife of the emperor's ambassador, but conceiving there was no more in the purchase than some waywardness of fancy, I took no precaution to note the stone. A gentleman in the family of the Legate of Ravenna, also, trafficked with me for an amethyst of the same design, but with him, neither, did I hold it important to be particular. Ha! here is my private mark that in truth seemeth to be of my own hand!"

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"Dost thou find a clue? What is the sign of which thou speakest?"

"Naught, noble senator, but a slur in a letter, which would not be apt to catch the eye of an over-credulous maiden."

"And thou parted with the seal to——?"

Hosea hesitated, for he foresaw some danger of losing his reward, by a too hasty communication of the truth.

"If it be important that the fact be known, Signor," he said, "I will consult my books. In a matter of this gravity, the senate should not be misled."

"Thou sayest well. The affair is grave, and the reward a sufficient pledge that we so esteem it."

"Something was said, illustrious Signor, of a hundred sequins; but my mind taketh little heed of such particulars, when the good of Venice is in question."

"A hundred is the sum I promised."

"I parted with a signet-ring, bearing some such design, to a female in the service of the nuncio's first gentleman. But this seal cannot come of that, since a woman of her station——"

"Art sure?" eagerly interrupted the Signor Gradenigo.

Hosea looked earnestly at his companion; and reading in his eye and countenence that that the clew was agreeable, he answered promptly,—

"As that I live under the law of Moses! The bawble had been long on hand without an offer, and I abandoned it to the uses of my money."

"The sequins are thine, excellent Jew! this clears the mystery of every doubt. Go; thou shalt have thy reward; and if thou hast any particulars in thy secret register, let me be quickly possessed of them. Go to, good Hosea, and be punctual as of wont. I tire of these constant exercises of the spirit!"

The Hebrew, exulting in his success, now took his leave, with a manner in which habitual cupidity and subdued policy completely mastered every other feeling. He disappeared by the passage through which he had entered.

It seemed, by the manner of the Signor Gradenigo, that the receptions for that evening had now ended. He carefully examined the locks of several secret drawers in his cabinet, extinguished the lights, closed and secured the doors, and quitted the place. For some time longer, however, he paced one of the principal rooms of the outer suit, until the usual hour having arrived, he sought his rest, and the palace was closed for the night.

The reader will have gained some insight into the character of the individual who was the chief actor in the foregoing scenes. The Signor Gradenigo was born with all the sympathies and natural kindliness of other men; but accident, and an education which had received a strong bias from the institutions of the self-styled republic, had made him the creature of a conventional policy. To him Venice seemed a free state, because he partook so largely of the benefits of her social system; and, though shrewd and practised in most of the affairs of the world, his faculties on the subject of the political ethics of his country were possessed of a rare and accommodating dulness. A senator, he stood in relation to the state as a director of a moneyed institution is proverbially placed in respect to his corporation; an agent of his collective measures, removed from the responsibilities of the man. He could reason warmly, if not acutely, concerning the principles of government, and it would be difficult, even in this money-getting age, to find a more zealous convert to the opinion that property was not a subordinate, but the absorbing interest of civilized life. He would talk ably of character, and honor, and virtue, and religion, and the rights of persons; but when called upon to act in their behalf, there was in his mind a tendency to blend them all with worldly policy, that proved as unerring as the gravitation of matter to the earth's centre. As a Venetian, he was equally opposed to the domination of one, or of the whole; being, as respects the first, a furious republican, and, in reference to the last, leaning to that singular sophism which calls the dominion of the majority the rule of many tyrants! In short, he was an aristocrat; and no man had more industriously or more successfully persuaded himself into the belief of all the dogmas that were favorable to his caste. He was a a powerful advocate of vested rights, for their possession was advantageous to himself; he was sensitively alive to innova-

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tions on usages and to vicissitudes in the histories of families, for calculation had substituted taste for principles; nor was he backward, on occasion, in defending his opinions, by analogies drawn from the decrees of Providence. With a philosophy that seemed to satisfy himself, he contended that, as God had established orders throughout his own creation, in a descending chain from angels to men, it was safe to follow an example which emanated from a wisdom that was infinite. Nothing could be more sound than the basis of his theory, though its application had the capital error of believing there was any imitation of nature in an endeavor to supplant it.

CHAPTER VII.

The moon went down; and nothing now was seen
Save where the lamp of a Madonna shone
Faintly.—ROGERS.

JUST as the secret audiences of the Palazzo Gradenigo were ended, the great square of St. Mark began to lose a portion of its gayety. The cafés were now occupied by parties who had the means, and were in the humor, to put their indulgencies to more substantial proof than the passing gibe or idle laugh; while those who were reluctantly compelled to turn their thoughts from the levities of the moment to the cares of the morrow, were departing in crowds to humble roofs and hard pillows. There remained one of the latter class, however, who continued to occupy a spot near the junction of the two squares, as motionless as if his naked feet grew to the stone on which he stood. It was Antonio.

The position of the fisherman brought the whole of his muscular form and bronzed features beneath the rays of the moon. The dark, anxious, and stern eyes were fixed upon the mild orb, as if their owner sought to penetrate into another world, in quest of that peace which he had never known in this. There was suffering in the expression of the weather-worn face; but it was the suffering of one whose native sensibilities had been a little deadened by too much familiarity with the lot of the feeble. To one, who considered life and humanity in any other than their familiar and vulgar aspects, he would have presented a touching picture of a noble nature, enduring with pride, blunted by habit; while to him, who regards the accidental dispositions of society as paramount laws, he might have presented the image of dogged turbulence and discontent, healthfully repressed by the hand of power. A heavy sigh struggled from the chest of the old man, and, stroking down the few hairs which time had left him, he lifted his cap from the pavement, and prepared to move.

"Thou art late from thy bed, Antonio," said a voice at his elbow. "The triglie must be of good price, or of great plenty, that one of thy trade can spare time to air himself in the Piazza at this hour. Thou hearest, the clock is telling the fifth hour of the night."

The fisherman bent his head aside, and regarded the figure of his masked companion, for a moment, with indifference, betraying neither curiosity nor feeling at his address.

"Since thou knowest me," he answered, "it is probable thou knowest that in quitting this place, I shall go to an empty dwelling. Since thou knowest me so well, thou should'st also know my wrongs."

"Who hath injured thee, worthy fisherman, that thou speaketh so boldly beneath the very windows of the Doge?"

"The state."

"This is hardly language for the ear of St. Mark! Were it too loudly spoken, yonder lion might growl.—Of what dost thou accuse the republic?

"Lead me to them that sent thee, and I will spare the trouble of a go-between. I am ready to tell my wrongs to the Doge on his throne; for what can one, poor and old as I, dread from their anger?"

"Thou believest me sent to betray thee?"

"Thou knowest thine own errand."

The other removed his mask, and turned his face towards the moon.

"Jacopo!" exclaimed the fisherman, gazing at the expressive Italian features; "one of thy character can have no errand with me."

A flush, that was visible even in that light, passed athwart the countenance of the Bravo; but he stilled every other exhibition of feeling.

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"Thou art wrong. My errand is with thee."

"Does the senate think a fisherman of the Lagunes of sufficient importance to be struck by a stiletto? Do thy work, then!" he added, glancing at his brown and naked bosom; "there is nothing to prevent thee!"

"Antonio, thou dost me wrong. The senate has no such purpose. But I have heard that thou hast reason for discontent, and that thou speakest openly, on the Lido and among the islands, of affairs that the patricians like not to be stirred among men of your class. I come, as a friend, to warn thee of the consequences of such indiscretion, rather than as one to harm thee."

"Thou art sent to say this?"

"Old man, age should teach thy tongue moderation. What will avail vain complaints against the republic, or what canst thou hope for, as their fruits, but evil to thyself, and evil to the child that thou lovest?"

"I know not—but when the heart is sore, the tongue will speak. They have taken away my boy, and they have left little behind that I value. The life they threaten is too short to be cared for."

"Thou should'st temper thy regrets with wisdom. The Signor Gradenigo has long been friendly to thee, and I have heard that thy mother nursed him. Try his ears with prayers, but cease to anger the republic with complaints."

Antonio looked wistfully at his companion, but when he had ceased, he shook his head mournfully, as if to express the hopelessness of relief from that quarter.

"I have told him all that a man, born and nursed on the Lagunes, can find words to say. He is a senator, Jacopo; and he thinks not of suffering he does not feel."

"Art thou not wrong, old man, to accuse him who hath been born in affluence, of hardness of heart, merely that he doth not feel the misery thou would'st avoid, too, were it in thy power? Thou hast thy gondola and nets, with health and the cunning of thy art, and in that art thou happier than he who hath neither—would'st thou forget thy skill, and share thy little stock with the beggar of San Marco, that your fortunes might be equal?"

"There may be truth in what thou sayest of our labor and our means, but when it comes to our young, nature is the same in both. I see no reason why the son of the patrician should go free, and the child of the fisherman be sold to blood. Have not the senators enough of happiness, in their riches and greatness, that they rob me of my son?"

"Thou knowest, Antonio, the state must be served, and were its officers to go into the palaces in quest of hardy mariners for the fleet, would they, think you, find them that would honor the winged lion, in the hour of his need? Thy old arm is muscular, and thy leg steady on the water, and they seek those who, like thee, have been trained to the seas."

"Thou should'st have said, also, and thy old breast is scarred. Before thy birth, Jacopo, I went against the Infidel, and my blood was shed, like water, for the state. But they have forgotten it, while there are rich marbles raised in the churches, which speak of what the nobles did, who came unharmed from the same wars."

"I have heard my father say as much," returned the Bravo, gloomily, and speaking an altered voice. "He, too, bled in that war; but that is forgotten."

The fisherman glanced a look around, and perceiving that several groups were conversing near, in the square, he signed to his companion to follow him and walked toward the quays.

"Thy father," he said, as they moved slowly on together, "was my comrade and my friend. I am old, Jacopo, and poor; my days are passed in toil on the Lagunes, and my nights in gaining strength to meet the labor of the morrow; but it hath grieved me to hear that the son of one I much loved, and with whom I have so often shared good and evil, fair and foul, hath taken to a life like that which men say is thine. The gold that is the price of blood was never yet blessed to him that gave, or him that received."

The Bravo listened in silence, though his companion, who at another moment, and under other emotions, would have avoided him as one shrinks from contagion, saw, on looking mournfully up into his face, that the muscles were slightly agitated, and that a paleness crossed his cheeks, which the light of the moon rendered ghastly.

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"Thou hast suffered poverty to tempt thee into grievous sin, Jacopo; but it is never too late to call on the saints for aid, and to lay aside the stiletto. It is not profitable for a man to be known in Venice as thy fellow, but the friend of thy father will not abandon one who shows a penitent spirit. Lay aside thy stiletto, and come with me to the Lagunes. Thou wilt find labor less burdensome than guilt, and though thou never canst be to me like the boy they have taken, for he was innocent as the lamb! thou wilt still be the son of an ancient comrade, and a stricken spirit. Come with me then to the Lagunes, for poverty and misery like mine, cannot meet with more contempt, even for being thy companion."

"What is it men say, that thou treatest me thus?" demanded Jacopo, in a low, struggling voice.

"I would they said untruth! But few die by violence, in Venice, that thy name is not uttered."

"And would they suffer one thus marked, to go openly on the canals, or to be at large in the great square of San Marco?"

"We never know the reasons of the senate. Some say thy time is not yet come, while others think thou art too powerful for judgment."

"Thou dost equal credit to the justice and the activity of the inquisition. But should I go with thee to-night, wilt thou be more discreet in speech among thy fellows of the Lido and the islands?"

"When the heart hath its load, the tongue will strive to lighten it! I would do anything to turn the child of my friend from his evil ways, but forget my own. Thou art used to deal with the patricians, Jacopo; would there be possibility for one, clad in this dress, and with a face blackened by the sun, to come to speak with the Doge?"

"There is no lack of seeming justice in Venice, Antonio; the want is in the substance. I doubt not thou would'st be heard."

"Then will I wait, here, upon the stones of the square, until he comes forth for the pomp of to-morrow, and try to move his heart to justice. He is old, like myself, and he hath bled too for the state, and what is more he is a father."

"So is the Signor Gradenigo."

"Thou doubtest his pity—ha?"

"Thou canst but try. The Doge of Venice will hearken to a petition from the meanest citizen. I think," added Jacopo, speaking so low as to be scarcely audible, "he would listen even to me."

"Though I am not able to put my prayer in such speech as becometh the ear of a great prince, he shall hear the truth from a wronged man. They call him the chosen of the state, and such a one should gladly listen to justice. This is a hard bed, Jacopo," continued the fisherman, seating himself at the foot of the column of St. Theodore "but I have slept on colder and as hard, when there was less reason to do it—a happy night."

The Bravo lingered a minute near the old man, who folded his arms on his naked breast, which was fanned by the sea-breeze, and disposed of his person to take his rest in the square, a practice not unusual among men of his class; but when he found that Antonio was inclined to be alone, he moved on, leaving the fisherman to himself.

The night was now getting to be advanced, and few of the revellers remained in the areas of the two squares. Jacopo cast a glance around, and noting the hour and the situation of the place, he proceeded to the edge of the quay. The public gondoliers had left their boats moored, as usual, at this spot, and a profound stillness reigned over the the whole bay. The water was scarce darkened by the air, which rather breathed upon than ruffled its surface, and no sound of oar was audible amid the forest of picturesque and classical spars, which crowded the view between the Piazzetta and the Giudecca. The Bravo hesitated, cast another wary glance around him, settled his mask, undid the slight fastenings of a boat, and presently he was gliding away into the centre of the basin.

"Who cometh?" demanded one, who seemingly stood at watch, in a felucca, anchored a little apart from all others.

"One expected," was the answer.

"Roderigo?"

"The same."

"Thou art late," said the mariner of Calabria, as Jacopo stepped upon the low deck of the Bella Sorrentina. "My people have long

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been below, and I have dreamt thrice of shipwreck, and twice of a heavy sirocco, since thou hast been expected."

"Thou hast had more time to wrong the customs. Is the felucca ready for her work?"

"As for the customs, there is little chance of gain in this greedy city. The senators secure all profits to themselves and their friends, while we of the barks are tied down to low freights and hard bargains. I have sent a dozen casks of lachrymæ Christi up the canal since the maskers came abroad, and beyond that I have not occasion. There is enough left for thy comfort, at need. Wilt drink?"

"I am sworn to sobriety. Is thy vessel ready, as wont, for the errand!"

"Is the senate as ready with its money? This is the fourth of my voyages in their service; and they have only to look into their own secrets to know the manner in which the work hath been done."

"They are content, and thou hast been well rewarded."

"Say it not. I have gained more gold by one lucky shipment of fruits from the isles, than by all their night-work. Would those who employ me give a little especial traffic on the entrance of the felucca, there might be advantage in the trade."

"There is nothing which St. Mark visits with a heavier punishment than frauds on his receipts. Have a care with thy wines, or thou wilt lose not only thy bark and thy voyage, but thy liberty!"

"This is just the ground of my complaint, Signor Roderigo. Rogue and no rogue, is the republic's motto. Here, they are as close in justice as a father amid his children; and there, it is better that what is done should be done at midnight. I like not the contradiction, for just as my hopes are a little raised, by what I have witnessed, perhaps a little too near, they are all blown to the winds, by such a frown as San Gennaro himself might cast upon a sinner."

"Remember thou art not in thy wide Mediterranean, but on a canal of Venice. This language might be unsafe, were it heard by less friendly ears."

"I thank thee for thy care, though the sight of yonder old palace is as good a hint to the loose tongue, as the sight of a gibbet, on the sea-shore, to a pirate. I met an ancient fellow in the Piazzetta, about the time the maskers came in, and we had some words on this matter. By his tally, every second man in Venice is well paid for reporting what the others say and do. 'Tis a pity, with all their seeming love of justice, good Roderigo, that the senate should let divers knaves go at large; men whose very faces cause the stones to redden with anger and shame!"

"I did not know that any such were openly seen in Venice; what is secretly done may be favored for a time, through difficulty of proof, but——"

"Cospetto! They tell me the councils have a short manner of making a sinner give up his misdeeds. Now, here is the miscreant Jacopo. What aileth thee, man? The anchor, on which thou leanest, is not heated."

"Nor is it of feathers; one's bones may ache from its touch without offence, I hope."

"The iron is of Elba—and was forged in a volcano. This Jacopo is one that should not go at large in an honest city, and yet he is seen pacing the square with as much ease as a noble in the Broglio!"

"I know him not."

"Not to know the boldest hand and surest stiletto in Venice, honest Roderigo, is to thy praise. But he is well marked among us of the port, and we never see the man but we begin to think of our sins, and of penances forgotten. I marvel much that the inquisitors do not give him to the devil, on some public ceremony, for the benefit of small offenders!"

"Are his deeds so notorious, that they might pronounce on his fate without proof?"

"Go, ask that question in the streets! Not a Christian loses his life in Venice without warning, and the number is not few, to say nothing of those who die with state fevers, but men see the work of his sure hand in the blow. Signor Roderigo, your canals are convenient graves for sudden deaths!"

"Methinks there is contradiction in this. Thou speakest of proofs of the hand that gave it, in the manner of the blow, and then thou callest in the aid of the canals to cover the whole deed. Truly, there is some wrong done this Jacopo, who is, haply, a man slandered."

"I have heard of slandering a priest, for

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they are Christians, bound to keep good names for the Church's honor, but to utter an injury against a bravo, would a little exceed the tongue of an avvocato. What mattereth it whether the hand be a shade deeper in color or not, when blood is on it?"

"Thou sayest truly," answered the pretended Roderigo, drawing a heavy breath. "It mattereth little, indeed, to him condemned, whether the sentence cometh of one or of many crimes."

"Dost know, friend Roderigo, that this very argument hath made me less scrupulous concerning the freight I am called on to carry in this secret trade of ours. Thou art fairly in the senate's business, worthy Stefano, I say to myself, and therefore the less reason that thou should'st be particular in the quality of the merchandise. That Jacopo hath an eye and a scowl that would betray him, were he chosen to the chair of St. Peter! But doff thy mask, Signor Roderigo, that the sea-air may cool thy cheek; 'tis time there should no longer be this suspicion between old and tried friends."

"My duty to those that send me forbid the liberty, else would I gladly stand face to face with thee, Master Stefano."

"Well, notwithstanding thy caution, cunning Signor, I would hazard ten of the sequins thou art to pay to me, that I will go, on the morrow, into the crowd of San Marco, and challenge thee openly, by name, among a thousand. Thou mayest as well unmask, for I tell thee thou art as well known to me as the latine yards of my felucca."

"The less need to uncover. There are certain signs, no doubt, by which men who meet so often should be known to each other."

"Thou hast a goodly countenance, Signor, and the less need to hide it. I have noted thee among the revellers, when thou hast thought thyself unseen, and I will say of thee this much, without wish to gain aught in our bargain, one of appearance fair as thine, Signor Roderigo, had better be seen openly than go thus for ever behind a cloud."

"My answer hath been made. What the state wills cannot be overlooked; but since I see thou knowest me, take heed not to betray thy knowledge."

"Thou would'st not be more safe with thy confessor. Diamine! I am not a man to gad about among the water-sellers, with a secret at the top of my voice; but thou didst leer aside when I winked at thee dancing among the maskers on the quay. Is it not so, Roderigo?"

"There is more cleverness in thee, Master Stefano, than I had thought—though thy readiness with the felucca is no secret."

"There are two things, Signor Roderigo, on which I value myself, but always, I hope, with Christian moderation. As a mariner of the coast, in mistral or sirocco, levanter or zephyr, few can claim more practice; and for knowing an acquaintance in a carnival, I believe the father of evil himself could not be so disguised that eye of mine should not see his foot! For anticipating a gale, or looking behind a mask, Signor Roderigo, I know not my own equal among men of small learning."

"These faculties are great gifts in one who liveth by the sea and a critical trade."

"Here came one Gino, a gondolier of Don Camillo Monforte, and an ancient fellow of mine, aboard the felucca attended by a woman in mask. He threw off the girl dexterously enough, and, as he thought, among strangers; but I knew her at a glance for the daughter of a wine-seller, who had already tasted lachrymæ Christi of mine. The woman was angered at the trick; but making the best of luck, we drove a bargain for the few casks which lay beneath the ballast, while Gino did his master's business in San Marco."

"And what that business was thou didst not learn, good Stefano?"

"How should I, Master Roderigo, when the gondolier scarce left time for greeting; but Annina——"

"Annina!"

"The same. Thou knowest Annina, old Tommaso's daughter; for she danced in the very set in which I detected thy countenance! I would not speak thus of the girl, but that I know thou art not backward to receive liqours that do not visit the custom-house thyself."

"For that, fear nothing. I have sworn to thee that no secret of this nature shall pass my lips. But this Annina is a girl of quick wit and much boldness."

"Between ourselves, Signor Roderigo, it is not easy to tell who is in the senate's pay here in Venice, or who is not. I have some-

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times fancied, by thy manner of starting, and the tones of thy voice, that thou wert thyself no less than the lieutenant-general of the galleys, a little disguised."

"And this with thy knowledge of men!"

"If faith were always equal, where would be its merit? Thou hast never been hotly chased by an infidel, Master Roderigo, or thou would'st know how the mind of man can change from hope to fear, from the big voice to the humble prayer! I remember once, in the confusion and hurry of baffling winds and whistling shot, having always turbans before the eye, and the bastinado in mind, to have beseeched St. Stefano in some such voice as one would use to a dog, and to have bullied the men with the whine of a young kitten. Corpo di Bacco! One hath need of experience in these affairs, Signor Roderigo, to know even his own merits."

"I believe thee. But who is this Gino, of whom thou hast spoken, and what has his occupation, as a gondolier, to do with one known in thy youth in Calabria?"

"Therein lie matters exceeding my knowledge. His master, and I may say, my master, for I was born on his estates, is the young Duca di Sant' Agata—the same that pushes his fortunes with the senate, in a claim to the riches and honors of the last Monforte that sat in thy councils. The debate hath so long endured that the lad hath made himself a gondolier, by sheer shoving an oar between his master's palace and those of the nobles he moves with interest—at least, such is Gino's own history of his education."

"I know the man. He wears the colors of him he serves. Is he of quick wit?"

"Signor Roderigo, all who come of Calabria cannot boast that advantage. We are no more than our neighbors—and there are exceptions in all communities, as in all families. Gino is ready enough with his oar, and as good a youth, in his way, as need be. But as to looking into things beyond their surface, why, we should not expect the delicacy of a becca fica in a goose. Nature makes men, though kings make nobles.—Gino is a gondolier."

"And of good skill?"

"I say nothing of his arm, or his leg, both of which are well enough in their places; but when it comes to knowing men and things—poor Gino is but a gondolier! The lad hath a most excellent heart, and is never backward to serve a friend. I love him, but thou would'st not have me say more than the truth will warrant."

"Well, keep thy felucca in readiness, for we know not the moment it may be needed."

"Thou hast only to bring thy freight, Signor, to have the bargain fulfilled."

"Adieu: I would recommend to thee to keep apart from all other trades, and to see that the revelries of to-morrow do not debauch thy people."

"God speed thee, Signor Roderigo.—Naught shall be wanting."

The Bravo stepped into his gondola, which glided from the felucca's side with a facility which showed, that an arm, skilled in its use, held the oar. He waved his hand, in adieu to Stefano, and then the boat disappeared among the hulls that crowded the port.

For a few minutes the padrone of the Bella Sorrentina continued to pace her decks, snuffing the fresh breeze that came in over the Lido, and then he sought his rest. By this time, the dark, silent gondolas, which had been floating, by hundreds, through the basin, were all gone. The sound of music was heard no longer on the canals, and Venice, at all times noiseless and peculiar, seemed to sleep the sleep of the dead.

CHAPTER VIII.

> The fisher came
> From his green islet, bringing o'er the waves
> His wife and little one; the husbandman
> From the firm land, with many a friar and nun
> And village maiden, her first flight from home,
> Crowding the common ferry.—ROGERS.

A BRIGHTER day than that which succeeded the night last mentioned never dawned upon the massive domes, the gorgeous palaces and the glittering canals of Venice. The sun had not been long above the level of the Lido, before the strains of horns and trumpets arose from the square of St. Mark. They were answered, in full echoes, from the distant arsenal. A thousand gondolas glided from the canals, stealing in every direction across the port, the Giudecca, and the various outer channels of the place, while the well-

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known routes, from Fusina and the neighboring isles, were dotted with endless lines of boats, urging their way toward the capital.

The citizens began to assemble early, in their holiday attire, while thousands of contadini landed at the different bridges, clad in the gay costumes of the main. Before the day had far advanced, all the avenues of the great square were again thronged, and by the time the bells of the venerable cathedral had finished a peal of high rejoicing, St. Mark's again teemed with its gay multitude. Few appeared in masks, but pleasure seemed to lighten every eye, while the frank and unconcealed countenance willingly courted the observation and sympathy of its neighbors. In short, Venice and her people were seen in all the gayety and carelessness of a favorite Italian festa. The banners of the conquered nations flapped heavily on the triumphal masts, each church-tower hung out its image of the winged lion, and every palace was rich in its hangings of tapestry and silk floating from balcony and window.

In the midst of this exhilarating and bright spectacle was heard the din of a hundred thousand voices. Above the constant hum, there arose, from time to time, the blasts of trumpets and the symphonies of rich music. Here, the improvisatore, secretly employed by a politic and mysterious government, recounted, with a rapid utterance, and in language suited to the popular ear, at the foot of the spars which upheld the conquered banners of Candia, Crete, and the Morea, the ancient triumphs of the republic; while, there, a ballad-singer chanted, to the greedy crowd, the glory and justice of San Marco. Shouts of approbation succeeded each happy allusion to the national renown, and bravos, loud and oft repeated, were the reward of the agents of the police, whenever they most administered to the self-delusion and vanity of their audience.

In the meantime, gondolas rich in carvings and gildings, and containing females renowned for grace and beauty, began to cluster, in hundreds, around the port. A general movement had already taken place among the shipping, and a wide and clear channel was opened from the quay, at the foot of the Piazzetta, to the distant bank, which shut out the waves of the Adriatic. Near this watery path, boats of all sizes and descriptions, filled with the curious and observant, were fast collecting.

The crowd thickened as the day drew in, all the vast plains of the Padovano appearing to have given up their people to swell the numbers of those that rejoiced. A few timid and irresolute maskers now began to appear in the throng, stealing a momentary pleasure under the favor of that privileged disguise, from out of the seclusion and monotony of their cloisters. Next came the rich marine equipages of the accredited agents of foreign states, and then, amid the sound of clarions and the cries of the populace, the Bucentaur rowed out of the channel of the arsenal, and came sweeping to her station, at the quay of St. Mark.

These preliminaries, which occupied some hours, being observed, the javelin-men, and others employed about the person of the head of the republic, were seen opening an avenue through the throng. After which, the rich strains of a hundred instruments proclaimed the approach of the Doge.

We shall not detain the narrative, to describe the pomp in which a luxurious and affluent aristocracy, that in general held itself aloof from familiar intercourse with those it ruled, displayed its magnificence to the eyes of the multitude, on an occasion of popular rejoicing. Long lines of senators, dressed in their robes of office, and attended by crowds of liveried followers, came from under the galleries of the palace, and descended by the Giant's Stairway into the sombre court. Thence, the whole issued into the Piazzetta, in order, and proceeded to their several stations, on the canopied deck of the well-known bark. Each patrician had his allotted place, and before the rear of the cortege had yet quitted the quay, there was a long and imposing row of grave legislators seated in the established order of their precedency. The ambassadors, the high dignitaries of the state, and the aged man, who had been chosen to bear the empty honors of sovereignty, still remained on the land, waiting, with the quiet of trained docility, the moment to embark. At this moment, a man of an embrowned visage, legs bare to the knee, and breast open to the breeze, rushed through the guards, and

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knelt on the stones of the quay, at his feet.

"Justice!—great prince!" cried the bold stranger; "justice and mercy! Listen to one, who has bled for St. Mark, and who hath his scars for his witnesses."

"Justice and mercy are not always companions," calmly observed he, who wore the horned bonnet, motioning to his official attendants to let the intruder stay.

"Mighty prince, I come for the last."

"Who and what art thou?"

"A fisherman of the Lagunes. One named Antonio, who seeketh the liberty of the prop of his years—a glorious boy, that force and the policy of the state have torn from me."

"This should not be! Violence is not the attribute of justice—but the youth hath offended the laws, and he suffereth for his crimes?"

"He is guilty, Excellent and most Serene Highness, of youth, and health, and strength, with some skill in the craft of the mariner. They have taken him, without warning or consent, for the service of the galleys, and have left me in my age, alone."

The expression of pity, which had taken possession of the venerable features of the prince, changed instantly to a look of uneasiness and distrust. The eye, which just before had melted with compassion, became cold and set in its meaning, and signing to his guards, he bowed with dignity to the attentive and curious auditors, among the foreign agents, to proceed.

"Bear him away," said an officer, who took his master's meaning from the glance; "the ceremonies may not be retarded for a prayer so idle."

Antonio offered no resistance, but yielding to the pressure of those around him, he sunk back meekly among the crowd, disappointment and sorrow giving place, for an instant, to an awe and an admiration of the gorgeous spectacle, that were perhaps in some degree inseparable from his condition and habits. In a few moments the slight interruption produced by this short scene was forgotten in the higher interest of the occasion.

When the ducal party had taken their places, and an admiral of reputation was in possession of the helm, the vast and gorgeous bark, with its gilded galleries thronged with attendants, swept away from the quay, with a grand and stately movement. Its departure was the signal for a new burst of trumpets and clarions, and for fresh acclamations from the people. The latter rushed to the edge of the water, and by the time the Bucentaur had reached the middle of the port, the stream was black with the gondolas that followed in her train. In this manner did the gay and shouting cortege sweep on, some darting ahead of the principal bark, and some clinging, like smaller fish swimming around the leviathan, as near to her sides, as the fall of the ponderous oars would allow. As each effort of the crew sent the galley farther from the land, the living train seemed to extend itself, by some secret principle of expansion; nor was the chain of its apparent connection entirely broken, until the Bucentaur had passed the island, long famous for its convent of religious Armenians. Here the movement became slower, in order to permit the thousand gondolas to approach, and then the whole moved forward, in nearly one solid phalanx, to the landing of the Lido.

The marriage of the Adriatic, as the ceremony was quaintly termed, has been too often described to need a repetition here. Our business is rather with incidents of a private and personal nature than with descriptions of public events, and we shall pass over all that has no immediate connection with the interest of the tale.

When the Bucentaur became stationary, a space around her stern was cleared, and the Doge appeared in a rich gallery, so constructed as to exhibit the action to all in sight. He held a ring, glittering with precious stones, on high, and, pronouncing the words of betrothal, he dropped it upon the bosom of his fancied spouse. Shouts arose, trumpets blew their blasts, and each lady waved her handkerchief in felicitation of the happy union. In the midst of the fracas—which was greatly heightened by the roar of cannon on board the cruisers in the channel, and from the guns in the arsenal—a boat glided into the open space beneath the gallery of the Bucentaur. The movement of the arm which directed the light gondola was dexterous and still strong,

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though the hairs of him who held the oar were thin and white. A suppliant eye was cast up at the happy faces that adorned the state of the prince, and then the look was changed intently to the water. A small fisherman's buoy fell from the boat, which glided away so soon, that, amid the animation and uproar of that moment, the action was scarce heeded by the excited throng.

The aquatic procession now returned towards the city, the multitude rending the air with shouts at the happy termination of a ceremony to which time and the sanction of the sovereign pontiff had given a species of sanctity that was somewhat increased by superstition. It is true that a few among the Venetians themselves regarded these famous nuptials of the Adriatic with indifference; and that several of the ministers of the northern and more maritime states, who were witnesses on the occasion, had scarcely concealed, as they cast glances of intelligence and pride among themselves, their smiles. Still, such was the influence of habit, for so much does even arrogant assumption, when long and perseveringly maintained, count among men, that neither the increasing feebleness of the republic, nor the known superiority of other powers on the very element which this pageant was intended to represent as the peculiar property of St. Mark, could yet cover the lofty pretension with the ridicule it merited. Time has since taught the world that Venice continued this idle deception for ages after both reason and modesty should have dictated its discontinuance; but, at the period of which we write, that ambitious, crapulous, and factitious state was rather beginning to feel the symptomatic evidence of its fading circumstances, than to be fully conscious of the swift progress of a downward course. In this manner do communities, like individuals, draw near their dissolution, inattentive to the symptoms of decay, until they are overtaken with that fate which finally overwhelms empires and their power in the common lot of man.

The Bucentaur did not return directly to the quay, to disburden itself of its grave and dignified load. The gaudy galley anchored in the centre of the port, and opposite to the wide mouth of the great canal. Officers had been busy, throughout the morning, in causing all the shipping and heavy boats, of which hundreds lay in that principal artery of the city, to remove from the centre of the passage, and heralds now summoned the citizens to witness the regatta, with which the public ceremonies of the day were to terminate.

Venice, from her peculiar formation and the vast number of her watermen, had long been celebrated for this species of amusement. Families were known and celebrated in her traditions for dexterous skill with the oar, as they were known in Rome for feats of a far less useful and of a more barbarous nature. It was usual to select from these races of watermen the most vigorous and skilful; and after invoking the aid of patron saints, and arousing their pride and recollections by songs that recounted the feats of their ancestors, to start them for the goal, with every incitement that pride and the love of victory could awaken.

Most of these ancient usages were still observed. As soon as the Bucentaur was in its station, some thirty or forty gondoliers were brought forth, clad in their gayest habiliments, and surrounded and supported by crowds of anxious friends and relatives. The intended competitors were expected to sustain the long-established reputations of their several names, and they were admonished of the disgrace of defeat. They were cheered by the men, and stimulated by the smiles and tears of the other sex. The rewards were recalled to their minds; they were fortified by prayers to the saints; and then they were dismissed, amid the cries and the wishes of the multitude, to seek their allotted places beneath the stern of the galley of state.

It has already been mentioned in these pages, that the city of Venice is divided into two nearly equal parts by a channel much broader than that of the ordinary passages of the town. This dividing artery, from its superior size and depth, and its greater importance, is called the grand canal. Its course is not unlike that of an undulating line which greatly increases its length. As it is much used by the larger boats of the bay being, in fact, a sort of secondary port; and its width is so considerable, it has throughout the whole distance but one bridge, the cele-

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brated Rialto. The regatta was to be held on this canal, which offered the requisites of length and space, and which, as it was lined with most of the palaces of the principal senators, afforded all the facilities necessary for viewing the struggle.

In passing from one end of this long course to the other, the men destined for the race was not permitted to make any exertion. There eyes roamed over the gorgeous hangings, which, as is still wont throughout Italy on all days of festa, floated from every window, and on groups of females in rich attire, brilliant with the peculiar charms of the famed Venetian beauty, that clustered in the balconies. Those who were domestics rose and answered to the encouraging signals thrown from above, as they passed the palaces of their masters; while those who were watermen of the public, endeavored to gather hope among the sympathizing faces of the multitude.

At length every formality had been duly observed, and the competitors assumed their places. The gondolas were much larger than those commonly used, and each was manned by three watermen, in the centre, directed by a fourth, who, standing on the little deck in the stern, steered, while he aided to impel the boat. There were light low staffs in the bows, with flags, that bore the distinguishing colors of several noble families of the republic, or which had such other simple devices as had been suggested by the fancies of those to whom they belonged. A few flourishes of the oars, resembling the preparatory movements which the master of fence makes ere he begins to push and parry, were given; a whirling of the boats, like the prancing of curbed racers, succeeded; and then at the report of of a gun, the whole darted away as if the gondolas were impelled by violition. The start was followed by a shout, which passed swiftly along the canal, and an eager agitation of heads that went from balcony to balcony, till the sympathic movement was communicated to the grave load under which the Bucentaur labored.

For a few minutes the difference in force and skill was not very obvious. Each gondola glided along the element apparently with that ease with which a light-winged swallow skims the lake, and with no visible advantage to any one of the ten. Then, as more art in him who steered, or greater powers of endurance in those who rowed, or some of the latent properties of the boat itself, came into service, the cluster of little barks, which had come off like a closely-united flock of birds taking flight together in alarm, began to open, till they formed a long and vacillating line, in the centre of the passage. The whole train shot beneath the bridge, so near each other as to render it still doubtful which was to conquer, and the exciting strife came more in view of the principal personages of the city.

But here those radical qualities, which insure success in efforts of this nature, manifested themselves. The weaker began to yield, the train to lengthen, and hopes and fears to increase, until those in the front presented the exhilarating spectacle of success, while those behind offered the still more noble sight of men struggling without hope. Gradually the distances between the boats increased, while that between them and the goal grew rapidly less, until three of those in advance came in, like glancing arrows, beneath the stern of the Bucentaur, with scarce a length between them. The prize was won, the conquerers were rewarded, and the artillery gave forth the usual signals of rejoicing. Music answered to the roar of cannon and the peals of bells, while sympathy with success, that predominant and so often dangerous principle of our nature, drew shouts even from the disappointed.

The clamor ceased, and a herald proclaimed aloud the commencement of a new and different struggle. The last, and what might be termed the national race, had been limited, by an ancient usage, to the known and recognized gondoliers of Venice. The prize had been awarded by the state, and the whole affair had somewhat of an official and political character. It was now announced, however, that a race was to be run, in which the reward was open to all competitors, without question as to their origin, or as to their ordinary occupations. An oar of gold, to which was attached a chain of the same precious metal, was exhibited as the boon of the Doge to him who showed most dexterity and strength in this new struggle; while a similar ornament of silver was to be the por-

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tion of him who showed the second-best dexterity and bottom. A mimic boat, of less precious metal, was the third prize. The gondolas were to be the usual light vehicles of the canals, and as the object was to display the peculiar skill of that city of islands, but one oarsman was allowed to each, on whom would necessarily fall the whole duty of guiding while he impelled his little bark. Any of those who had been engaged in the previous trial were admitted to this; and all desirous of taking part in the new struggle were commanded to come beneath the stern of the Bucentaur, within a prescribed number of minutes, that note might be had of their wishes. As notice of this arrangement had been previously given, the interval between the two races was not long.

The first who came out of the crowd of boats, which environed the vacant place that had been left for the competitors, was a gondolier of the public landing, well known for his skill with the oar, and his song on the canal.

"How art thou called, and in whose name dost thou put thy chance?" demanded the herald of this aquatic course.

"All know me for Bartolomeo, one who lives between the Piazzetta and the Lido, and, like a loyal Venetian, I trust in San Teodoro."

"Thou art well protected; take thy place, and await thy fortune."

The conscious waterman swept the water with a back stroke of his blade, and the light gondola whirled away into the centre of the vacant spot, like a swan giving a sudden glance aside.

"And who art thou?" demanded the official of the next that came.

"Enrico, a gondolier of Fusina. I come to try my oar with the braggarts of the canals."

"In whom is thy trust?"

"Sant' Antonio di Padua."

"Thou wilt need his aid, though we commend thy spirit. Enter, and take place."—"And who art thou?" he continued, to another, when the second had imitated the easy skill of the first.

"I am called Gino of Calabria, a gondolier in private service."

"What noble retaineth thee?"

"The illustrious and most excellent Don Camillo Monforte, duca and lord of Sant' Agata in Napoli, and of right a senator in Venice."

"Thou should'st have come of Padua, friend, by thy knowledge of the laws! Dost thou trust in him thou servest for the victory?"

There was a movement among the senators at the answer of Gino; and the half-terrified varlet thought he perceived frowns gathering on more than one brow. He looked around in quest of him whose greatness he had vaunted, as if he sought succor.

"Wilt thou name thy support in this great trial of force?" resumed the herald.

"My master," uttered the terrified Gino, "St. Januarius, and St. Mark."

"Thou art well defended. Should the two latter fail thee, thou mayest surely count on the first!"

"Signor Monforte has an illustrious name, and he is welcome to our Venetian sports," observed the Doge, slightly bending his head towards the young Calabrian noble, who stood at no great distance, in a gondola of state, regarding the scene with a deeply-interested countenance. This cautious interruption of the pleasantries of the official was acknowledged by a low reverence, and the matter proceeded.

"Take thy station, Gino of Calabria, and a happy fortune be thine," said the latter; then turning to another, he asked in surprise—"Why art thou here?"

"I come to try my gondola's swiftness."

"Thou art old, and unequal to this struggle; husband thy strength for daily toil. An ill-advised ambition hath put thee on this useless trial."

The new aspirant had forced a common fisherman's gondola, of no bad shape, and of sufficient lightness, but which bore about it all the vulgar signs of its daily uses, beneath the gallery of the Bucentaur. He received the reproof meekly, and was about to turn his boat aside, though with a sorrowing and mortified eye, when a sign from the Doge arrested his arm.

"Question him, as of wont," said the prince.

"How art thou named?" continued the reluctant official, who, like all of subordinate

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condition, had far more jealousy of the dignity of the sports he directed, than his superior.

"I am known as Antonio, a fisherman of the Lagunes."

"Thou art old!"

"Signor, none know it better than I. It is sixty summers since I first threw net, or line, into the water."

"Nor art thou clad as befitteth one who cometh before the state of Venice, in a regatta."

"I am here in the best that I have. Let them who would do the nobles greater honor, come in better."

"Thy limbs are uncovered—thy bosom bare—thy sinews feeble—go to; thou art ill advised to interrupt the pleasures of the nobles, by this levity."

Again Antonio would have shrunk from the ten thousand eyes that shone upon him, when the calm voice of the Doge once more came to his aid.

"The struggle is open to all," said the sovereign; "still I would advise the poor and aged man to take counsel; give him silver, for want urges him to this hopeless trial."

"Thou hearest; alms are offered thee; but give place to those who are stronger, and more seemly for the sport."

"I will obey, as is the duty of one born and accustomed to poverty. They said the race was open to all, and I crave the pardon of the nobles, since I meant to do them no dishonor."

"Justice in the palace, and justice on the canals," hastily observed the prince. "If he will continue, it is his right. It is the pride of St. Mark that his balances are held with an even hand."

A murmur of applause succeeded the specious sentiment, for the powerful rarely affect the noble attribute of justice, however limited may be its exercise, without their words finding an echo in the tongues of the selfish.

"Thou hearest—His Highness, who is the voice of a mighty state, says thou mayest remain;—though thou art still advised to withdraw."

"I will then see what virtue is left in this naked arm," returned Antonio, casting a mournful glance, and one that was not entirely free from the latent vanity of man, at his meagre and threadbare attire. "The limb hath its scars, but the infidels may have spared enough, for the little I ask."

"In whom is thy faith?"

"Blessed St. Anthony, of the Miraculous Draught."

"Take thy place.—Ha! here cometh one unwilling to be known! How now! who appears with so false a face?"

"Call me Mask."

"So neat and just a leg and arm need not have hid their fellow, the countenance. Is it your Highness's pleasure that one disguised should be entered for the sports?"

"Doubt it not. A mask is sacred in Venice. It is the glory of our excellent and wise laws, that he who seeketh to dwell within the privacy of his own thoughts, and to keep aloof from curiosity by shadowing his features, rangeth our streets and canals as if he dwelt in the security of his own abode. Such are the high privileges of liberty, and such it is to be a citizen of a generous, a magnanimous, and a free state!"

A thousand bowed in approbation of the sentiment, and a rumor passed, from mouth to mouth, that a young noble was about to try his strength, in the regatta, in compliment to some wayward beauty.

"Such is justice!" exclaimed the herald, in a loud voice, admiration apparently overcoming respect, in the ardor of the moment. "Happy is he that is born in Venice, and envied are the people in whose councils wisdom and mercy preside, like lovely and benignant sisters! On whom dost thou rely?"

"Mine own arm."

"Ha! This is impious! None so presuming may enter into these privileged sports."

The hurried exclamation of the herald was accompanied by a general stir, such as denotes sudden and strong emotion in a multitude.

"The children of the republic are protected by an even hand," observed the venerable prince. "It formeth our just pride, and blessed St. Mark forbid that aught resembling vain-glory should be uttered! but it is truly our boast that we know no difference between our subjects of the islands, or those of the Dalmatian coast; between Padua, or Candia; Corfu, or St. Giorgio.

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Still it is not permitted for any to refuse the intervention of the saints."

"Name thy patron, or quit the place," continued the observant herald, anew.

The stranger paused, as if he looked into his mind, and then he answered—

"San Giovanni of the Wilderness."

"Thou namest one of blessed memory!"

"I name him who may have pity on me, in this living desert."

"The temper of thy soul is best known to thyself, but this reverend rank of patricians, yonder brilliant show of beauty, and that goodly multitude, may claim another name. —Take thy place."

While the herald proceeded to take the names of three or four more applicants, all gondoliers in private service, a murmur ran through the spectators, which proved how much their interest and curiosity had been awakened, by the replies and appearance of the two last competitors. In the meantime, the young nobles who entertained those who came last began to move among the throng of boats, with the intention of making such manifestations of their gallant desires, and personal devotion, as suited the customs and opinions of the age. The list was now proclaimed to be full, and the gondolas were towed off, as before, toward the starting-point, leaving the place, beneath the stern of the Bucentaur, vacant. The scene that followed, consequently passed directly before the eyes of those grave men, who charged themselves with most of the private interests, as well as with the public concerns of Venice.

There were many unmasked and high-born dames, whirling about in their boats, attended by cavaliers in rich attire, and, here and there, appeared a pair of dark lustrous eyes, peeping through the silk of a visor, that concealed some countenance too youthful for exposure, in so gay a scene. One gondola, in particular, was remarked for the singular grace and beauty of the form it held, qualities which made themselves apparent, even through the half-disguise of the simple habiliments she wore. The boat, the servants, and the ladies, for there were two, were alike distinguished for that air of severe but finished simplicity, which oftener denotes the presence of high quality and true taste, than a more lavish expenditure of vulgar ornament. A Carmelite, whose features were concealed by his cowl, testified that their condition was high, and lent a dignity to their presence by his reverend and grave protection. A hundred gondolas approached this party, and after as many fruitless efforts to penetrate the disguises, glided away, while whispers and interrogatories passed from one to the other, to learn the name and station of the youthful beauty. At length, a gay bark, with water-men in gorgeous liveries, and in whose equipment there was a studied display of magnificence, came into the little circle that curiosity had drawn together. The single cavalier, who occupied the seat, arose, for few gondolas appeared that day with their gloomy-looking and mysterious pavilions, and saluted the masked females, with the ease of one accustomed to all presences, but with the reserve of deep respect.

"I have a favorite follower in this race," he said gallantly, "and one in whose skill and force I put great trust. Until now, I have uselessly sought a lady of a beauty and merit so rare, as to warrant that I should place his fortune on her smiles. But I seek no farther."

"You are gifted with a keen sight, signor, that you discover all you seek beneath these masks," returned one of the two females, while their companion, the Carmelite, bowed graciously to the compliment, which seemed little more than was warranted by the usage of such scenes.

"There are other means of recognition than the eyes, and other sources of admiration than the senses, lady. Conceal yourselves as you will, here do I know that I am near the fairest face, the warmest heart, and the purest mind of Venice!"

"This is bold augury, signor," returned she, who was evidently the oldest of the two, glancing a look at her companion, as if to note the effect of this gallant speech. "Venice has a name for the beauty of its dames, and the sun of Italy warms many a generous heart."

"Better that such noble gifts should be directed to the worship of the Creator than of the creature," murmured the monk.

"Some there are, holy father, who have admiration for both. Such I would fain hope is the happy lot of her who is favored

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with the spiritual counsel of one so virtuous and wise as yourself. Here I place my fortune, let what may follow; and here would I gladly place a heavier stake, were it permitted."

As the cavalier spoke, he tendered to the silent fair a bouquet of the sweetest and most fragrant flowers; and among them were those to which poets and custom have ascribed the emblematic qualities of constancy and love. She, to whom this offering of gallantry was made, hesitated to accept it. It much exceeded the reserve imposed on one of her station and years, to allow of such homage from the other sex, though the occasion was generally deemed one that admitted of more than usual gallantry; and she evidently shrunk, with the sensitiveness of one whose feelings were unpractised, from an homage so public.

"Receive the flowers, my love," mildly whispered her companion; "the cavalier who offers them simply intends to show the quality of his breeding."

"That will be seen in the end," hastily returned Don Camillo—for it was he. "Signora, adieu; we have met on this water when there was less restraint between us."

He bowed, and signing to his gondolier, was quickly lost in the crowd of boats. Ere the barks, however, were separated, the mask of the silent fair was slightly moved, as if she sought relief from the air; and the Neapolitan was rewarded for his gallantry by a momentary glance at the glowing countenance of Violetta.

"Thy guardian hath a displeased eye," hurriedly observed Donna Florinda. "I wonder that we should be known!"

"I should more wonder that we were not. I could recall the noble Neapolitan cavalier amid a million! Thou dost not remember all that I owe to him!"

Donna Florinda did not answer; but in secret she offered up a fervent prayer that the obligation might be blessed to the future happiness of her who had received it. There was a furtive and uneasy glance between her and the Carmelite; but, as neither spoke, a long and thoughtful silence succeeded the rencontre.

From this musing, the party, in common with all the gay and laughing multitude by which they were surrounded, were reminded of the business on which they were assembled by the signal-gun, the agitation on the great canal nearest the scene of strife, and a clear blast of the trumpets. But in order that the narrative may proceed regularly, it is fit that we should return, a little, in the order of time.

CHAPTER IX.

> Here art thou in appointment fresh and fair,
> Anticipating time with startling courage.
> —SHAKESPEARE.

IT has been seen that the gondolas, which were to contend in the race, had been towed toward the place of starting, in order that the men might enter on the struggle with undiminished vigor. In this precaution, even the humble and half-clad fisherman had not been neglected, but his boat, like the others, was attached to the larger barges to which this duty had been assigned. Still, as he passed along the canal, before the crowded balconies and groaning vessels which lined its sides, there arose that scornful and deriding laugh, which seems ever to grow more strong and bold as misfortune weighs most heavily on its subject.

The old man was not unconscious of the remarks of which he was the subject; and, as it is rare indeed that our sensibilities do not survive our better fortunes, even he was so far conscious of a fall as not to be callous to contempt thus openly expressed. He looked wistfully on every side of him, and seemed to search, in every eye he encountered, some portion of the sympathy which his meek and humble feelings still craved. But even the men of his caste and profession threw gibes upon his ear; and, though of all the competitors perhaps the one whose motive most hallowed his ambition, he was held to be the only proper subject of mirth. For the solution of this revolting trait of human character, we are not to look to Venice and her institutions, since it is known that none are so arrogant, on occasions, as the ridden, and that the abject and insolent spirits are usually tenants of the same bosom.

The movement of the boats brought those

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of the masked waterman and the subject of these taunts side by side.

"Thou art not the favorite in this strife," observed the former, when a fresh burst of gibes were showered on the head of his unresisting associate. "Thou hast not been sufficiently heedful of thy attire; for this is a town of luxury, and he who would meet applause must appear on the canals in the guise of one less borne upon by fortune."

"I know them! I know them!" returned the fisherman; "they are led away by their pride, and they think ill of one who cannot share in their vanities. But, friend unknown, I have brought with me a face which, old though it be, and wrinkled, and worn by the weather like the stones of the sea-shore, is uncovered to the eye, and without shame."

"There may be reasons which thou knowest not, why I wear a mask. But if my face be hid, the limbs are bare, and thou seest there is no lack of sinews to make good that which I have undertaken. Thou should'st have thought better of the matter, ere thou puttest thyself in the way of so much mortification. Defeat will not cause the people to treat thee more tenderly."

"If my sinews are old and stiffened, Signor Mask, they are long used to toil. As to shame, if it is a shame to be below the rest of mankind in fortune, it will not now come for the first time. A heavy sorrow hath befallen me, and this race may lighten the burden of grief. I shall not pretend that I hear this laughter and all these scornful speeches as one listens to the evening breeze on the Lagunes—for a man is still a man, though he lives with the humblest, and eats of the coarsest. But let it pass; Sant' Antonio will give me heart to bear it."

"Thou hast a stout mind, fisherman; and I would gladly pray my patron to grant thee a stronger arm, but that I have much need of this victory myself. Wilt thou be content with the second prize, if, by any manner of skill, I might aid thee in thy efforts?—for, I suppose, the metal of the third is as little to thy taste as it is to my own."

"Nay, I count not on gold, or silver."

"Can the honor of such a struggle awaken the pride of one like thee?"

The old man looked earnestly at his companion; but he shook his head, without answer. Fresh merriment, at his expense, caused him to bend his face toward the scoffers; and he perceived they were, just then, passing a numerous group of his fellows of the Lagunes, who seemed to feel that his unjustifiable ambition reflected, in some degree, on the honor of their whole body.

"How now, old Antonio!" shouted the boldest of the band—"is it not enough that thou hast won the honors of the net, but thou would'st have a golden oa. at thy neck?"

"We shall yet see him of the senate!" cried a second.

"He standeth in need of the horned bonnet for his naked head," continued a third. "We shall see the brave Admiral Antonio, sailing in the Bucentaur, with the nobles of the land!"

Their sallies were succeeded by coarse laughter. Even the fair, in the balconies were not uninfluenced by these constant gibes, and the apparent discrepancy between the condition and the means of so unusual a pretender to the honors of the regatta. The purpose of the old man wavered; but he seemed goaded by some inward incentive that still enabled him to maintain his ground. His companion closely watched the varying expression of a countenance that was far too little trained in deception to conceal the feelings within; and, as they approached the place of starting, he again spoke.

"Thou mayest yet withdraw," he said—"why should one of thy years make the little time he has to stay bitter, by bearing the ridicule of his associates for the rest of his life?"

"St. Anthony did a greater wonder when he caused the fishes to come upon the waters to hear his preaching, and I will not show a a cowardly heart at a moment when there is most need of resolution."

The masked waterman crossed himself devoutly; and, relinquishing all further design to persuade the other to abandon the fruitless contest, he gave all his thoughts to his own interest in the coming struggle.

The narrowness of most of the canals of Venice, with the innumerable angles and the constant passing, have given rise to a fashion of construction and of rowing that are so peculiar to that city and its immediate de-

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pendencies as to require some explanation. The reader has doubtless already understood that a gondola is a long, narrow, and light boat, adapted to the uses of the place, and distinct from the wherries of all other towns. The distance between the dwellings, on most of the canals, is so small that the width of the latter does not admit of the use of oars on both sides at the same time. The necessity of constantly turning aside to give room for others, and the frequency of the bridges and the corners, have suggested the expediency of placing the face of the waterman in the direction in which the boat is steering, and, of course, of keeping him on his feet. As every gondola, when fully equipped, has its pavilion in the centre, the height of the latter renders it necessary to place him who steers on such an elevation as will enable him to overlook it. From these several causes, a one-oared boat, in Venice, is propelled by a gondolier who stands on a little angular deck in its stern, formed like the low roof of a house; and the stroke of the oar is given by a push, instead of a pull, as is common elsewhere. This habit of rowing erect, however, which is usually done by a forward, instead of a backward, movement of the body, is not unfrequent in all the ports of the Mediterranean, though in no other is there a boat which resembles the gondola in all its properties or uses. The upright position of the gondolier requires that the pivot on which the oar rests should have a corresponding elevation; and there is, consequently, a species of bumkin, raised from the side of the boat, to the desired height, and which, being formed of a crooked and very irregular knee of wood, has two or three rowlocks, one above the other, to suit the stature of different individuals, or to give a broader or a narrower sweep of the blade as the movement shall require. As there is frequent occasion to cast the oar from one of these rowlocks to the other, and not unfrequently to change its side, it rests in a very open bed; and the instrument is kept in its place by great dexterity alone, and by a perfect knowledge of the means of accommodating the force and the rapidity of the effort to the forward movement of the boat and the resistance of the water. All these difficulties united render skill in a gondolier one of the most delicate branches of a waterman's art, as it is clear that muscular strength alone, though of great aid, can avail but little in such a practice.

The great canal of Venice, following its windings, being more than a league in length, the distance in the present race was reduced nearly half, by causing the boats to start from the Rialto. At this point, then, the gondolas were all assembled, attended by those who were to place them. As the whole of the population, which, before, had been extended along the entire course of the water, was now crowded between the bridge and the Bucentaur, the long and graceful avenue resembled a vista of human heads. It was an imposing sight to look along that bright and living lane, and the heart of each competitor beat high, as hope, or pride, or apprehension, became the feeling of the moment.

"Gino of Calabria," cried the marshal who placed the gondolas, "thy station is on the right. Take it, and St. Januarius speed thee!"

The servitor of Don Camillo assumed his oar, and the boat glided gracefully into its berth.

"Thou comest next, Enrico of Fusina. Call stoutly on thy Paduan patron, and husband thy strength; for none of the main have ever yet borne away a prize in Venice."

He then summoned, in succession, those whose names have not been mentioned, and placed them, side by side, in the centre of the canal.

"Here is place for thee, Signor," continued the officer, inclining his head to the unknown gondolier; for he had imbibed the general impression that the face of some young patrician was concealed beneath the mask, to humor the fancy of same capricious fair.—"Chance hath given thee the extreme left."

"Thou hast forgotten to call the fisherman," observed the masker, as he drove his own gondola into its station.

"Does the hoary fool persist in exposing his vanity and his rags to the best of Venice?"

"I can take place in the rear," meekly observed Antonio. "There may be those in the line it doth not become one like me to crowd; and a few strokes of the oar, more or

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less, can differ but little, in so long a strife."

"Thou hadst better push modesty to discretion, and remain."

"If it be your pleasure, Signor, I would rather see what St. Anthony may do for an old fisherman, who has prayed for him, night and morning, these sixty years?"

"It is thy right; and, as thou seemest content with it, keep the place thou hast in the rear. It is only occupying it a little earlier than thou would'st otherwise. Now, recall the rules of the games, hardy gondoliers, and make thy last appeal to thy patrons. There is to be no crossing, or other foul expedients; naught except ready oars and nimble wrists. He who varies, needlessly, from his line until he leadeth, shall be recalled by name; and whoever is guilty of any act to spoil the sports, or otherwise to offend the patricians, shall be both checked and punished. Be ready for the signal."

The assistant, who was in a strongly manned boat, fell back a little, while runners, similarly equipped, went ahead to order the curious from the water. These preparations were scarcely made, when a signal floated on the nearest dome. It was repeated on the campanile, and a gun was fired at the arsenal. A deep but suppressed murmur arose in the throng, which was as quickly succeeded by suspense.

Each gondolier had suffered the bows of his boat to incline slightly toward the left shore of the canal, as the jockey is seen, at the starting-post, to turn his courser aside, in order to repress its ardor, or divert its attention. But the first long and broad sweep of the oar brought them all in a line again, and away they glided in a body.

For the first few minutes there was no difference in speed, nor any sign by which the instructed might detect the probable evidence of defeat or success. The whole ten, which formed the front line, skimmed the water with an equal velocity, beak to beak, as if some secret attraction held each in its place, while the humble, though equally light bark of the fisherman steadily kept its position in the rear.

The boats were soon held in command. The oars got their justest poise and widest sweep, and the wrists of the men accustomed to their play. The line began to waver. It undulated, the glittering prow of one protruding beyond the others; and then it changed its forms. Enrico of Fusina shot ahead, and, privileged by success he insensibly sheered more into the centre of the canal, avoiding, by the change, the eddies, and the other obstructions of the shore. This manœuvre which, in the language of the course, would have been called "taking the track," had the additional advantage of throwing upon those who followed some trifling impediment from the backwater. The sturdy and practised Bartolomeo of the Lido, as his companions usually called him, came next, occupying the space on his leader's quarter, where he suffered least from the reaction caused by the stroke of his oar. The gondolier of Don Camillo, also, soon shot out of the crowd, and was seen plying his arms vigorously still farther to the right, and a little in the rear of Bartolomeo. Then came, in the centre of the canal, and near as might be in the rear of the triumphant waterman of the main, a dense body, with little order and varying positions, compelling each other to give way, and otherwise increasing the difficulties of their struggle. More to the left, and so near to the palaces as barely to allow room for the sweep of his oar, was the masked competitor, whose progress seemed retarded by some unseen cause, for he gradually fell behind all the others, until several boats' lengths of open water lay between him and even the group of his nameless opponents. Still he plied his arms steadily, and with sufficient skill. As the interest of mystery has had been excited in his favor, a rumor passed up the canal, that the young cavalier had been little favored by fortune in the choice of a boat. Others, who reflected more deeply on causes, whispered of the folly of one of his habits, taking the risk of mortification by a competition with men whose daily labor had hardened their sinews, and whose practice enabled them to judge closely of every chance of the race. But when the eyes of the multitude turned from the cluster of passing boats to the solitary barge of the fisherman, who came singly on in the rear, admiration was again turned to derision.

Antonio had cast aside the cap he wore of

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wont, and the few straggling hairs that were left streamed about his hollow temples, leaving the whole of his swarthy features exposed to view. More than once, as the gondola came on, his eyes turned aside reproachfully, as if he keenly felt the stings of so many unlicensed tongues applied to feelings which, though blunted by his habits and condition, were far from being extinguished. Laugh rose above laugh, however, and taunt succeeded taunt more bitterly, as the boats came among the gorgeous palaces, which lined the canal nearer to the goal. It was not that the owners of these lordly piles indulged in the unfeeling triumph, but their dependants, constantly subject themselves to the degrading influence of a superior presence, let loose the long-pent torrents of their arrogance on the head of the first unresisting subject which offered.

Antonio bore all these gibes manfully, if not in tranquillity, and always without retort, until he again approached the spot occupied by his companions of the Lagunes. Here his eye sunk under the reproaches, and his oar faltered. The taunts and denunciations increased as he lost ground, and there was a moment when the rebuked and humbled spirit of the old man seemed about to relinquish the contest. But dashing a hand across his brow, as if to clear the sight which had become dimmed and confused, he continued to ply the oar, and, happily, he was soon past the point most trying to his resolution. From this moment the cries against the fisherman diminished, and as the Bucentaur, though, still distant, was now in sight, interest in the issue of the race absorbed all other feelings.

Enrico still kept the lead ; but the judges of the gondolier's skill began to detect signs of exhaustion in his faltering stroke. The waterman of the Lido pressed him hard, and the Calabrian was drawing more into a line with them both. At this moment, too, the masked competitor exhibited a force and skill that none had expected to see in one of his supposed rank. His body was thrown more upon the effort of the oar, and as his leg was stretched behind to aid the stroke, it discovered a volume of muscle, and an excellence of proportion, that excited murmurs of applause. The consequence was soon apparent. His gondola glided past the crowd, in the centre of the canal, and by a change that was nearly insensible, he became the fourth in the race. The shouts which rewarded his success had scarcely parted from the multitude, ere their admiration was called to a new and an entirely unexpected aspect in the struggle.

Left to his own exertions, and less annoyed by that derision and contempt which often defeat even more generous exertions, Antonio had drawn nearer to the crowd of nameless competitors. Though undistinguished in this narrative, there were seen, in that group of gondoliers, faces well known on the canals of Venice, as belonging to watermen, in whose dexterity and force the city took pride. Either favored by his isolated position, or availing himself of the embarrassment these men gave to each other, the despised fisherman was seen a little on their left, coming up abreast, with a stroke and velocity that promised further success. The expectation was quickly realized. He passed them all, amid a dead and wondering silence, and took his station, as fifth in the struggle.

From this moment all interest in those who formed the vulgar mass was lost. Every eye was turned towards the front, where the strife increased at each stroke of the oar, and where the issue began to assume a new and doubtful character. The exertions of the waterman of Fusina were seemingly redoubled, though his boat went no faster. The gondola of Bartolomeo shot past him ; it was followed by those of Gino and the masked gondolier, while not a cry betrayed the breathless interest of the multitude. But when the boat of Antonio also swept ahead, there arose such a hum of voices as escapes a throng when a sudden and violent change of feeling is produced in their wayward sentiments. Enrico was frantic with the disgrace. He urged every power of his frame to avert the dishonor with the desperate energy of an Italian, and then he cast himself into the bottom of the gondola, tearing his hair and weeping, in agony. His example was followed by those in the rear, though with more governed feelings, for they shot aside among the boats which lined the canal and were lost to view.

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From this open and unexpected abandon-

ment of the struggle the spectators got the surest evidence of its desperate character. But as a man has little sympathy for the unfortunate, when his feelings are excited by competition, the defeated were quickly forgotten. The name of Bartolomeo was borne high upon the winds by a thousand voices, and his followers of the Piazzetta and the Lido called upon him aloud to die for the honor of their craft. Well did the sturdy gondolier answer to their wishes, for palace after palace was left behind, and no further change was made in the relative positions of the boats. But, like his predecessor, the leader redoubled his efforts with a diminished effect, and Venice had the mortification of seeing a stranger leading one of the most brilliant of her regattas. Bartolomeo no sooner lost place, than Gino, the masker, and the despised Antonio, in turn, shot by, leaving him who had so lately been first in the race, the last. He did not, however, relinquish the strife,but continued to struggle with the energy of one who merited a better fortune.

When this unexpected and entirely new character was given to the contest, there still remained a broad sheet of water between the advancing gondolas and the goal. Gino led, and with many favorable symptoms of his being able to maintain his advantage. He was encouraged by the shouts of the multitude, who now forgot his Calabrian origin, in his success, while many of the serving-men of his master cheered him on by name. All would not do. The masked waterman, for the first time, threw the grandeur of his skill and force into the oar. The ashen instrument bent to the power of an arm whose strength appeared to increase at will, and the movements of his body became rapid as the leaps of the greyhound. The pliant gondola obeyed, and amid a shout which passed from the Piazzetta to the Rialto, it glided ahead.

If success gives force and increases the physical and moral energies, there is a fearful and certain reaction in defeat. The follower of Don Camillo who was no exception to the general law, and when the masked competitor passed him, the boat of Antonio followed as if it were impelled by the same strokes. The distance between the two leading gondolas even now seemed to lessen, and there was a moment of breathless interest, when all there expected to see the fisherman, in despite of his years and boat, shooting past his rival.

But expectation was deceived. He of the mask, notwithstanding his previous efforts, seemed to sport with the toil, so ready was the sweep of his oar, so sure its stroke, and so vigorous the arm by which it was impelled. Nor was Antonio an antagonist to despise. If there was less of the grace of a practised gondolier of the canals in his attitudes than in those of his companion, there was no relaxation in the force of his sinews. They sustained him to the last with that enduring power which had been begotten by threescore years of unremitting labor, and while his still athletic form was exerted to the utmost there appeared no failing of its energies.

A few moments sent the leading gondolas several lengths ahead of their nearest followers. The dark beak of the fisherman's boat hung upon the quarter of the more showy bark of his antagonist, but it could do no more. The port was open before them and they glanced by church, palace, barge, mystic, and felucca, without the slightest inequality in their relative speed. The masked waterman glanced a look behind, as if to calculate his advantage, and then bending again to his pliant oar, he spoke, loud enough, to be heard only by him who pressed so hard upon his track.

"Thou hast deceived me, fisherman!" he said; "there is more of manhood in thee yet than I had thought."

"If there is manhood in my arms, there is childishness and sorrow at the heart," was the reply.

"Dost thou so prize a golden bawble? Thou art second; be content with thy lot."

"It will not do; I must be foremost, or I have wearied my old limbs in vain!"

This brief dialogue was uttered with an ease that showed how far use had accustomed both to powerful bodily efforts, and with a firmness of tones that few could have equalled, in a moment of so great a physicial effort. The masker was silent, but his purpose seemed to waver. Twenty strokes of his powerful oar-blade, and the goal was attained; but his sinews were not so much extended, and that limb, which had shown so fine a development

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of muscle, was less swollen and rigid. The gondola of old Antonio glided abeam.

"Push thy soul into the blade," muttered he of the mask, "or thou wilt yet be beaten!"

The fisherman threw every effort of his body on the coming effort, and he gained a fathom. Another stroke caused the boat to quiver to its centre, and the water curled from its bows, like the ripple of a rapid. Then the gondola darted between the two goal-barges, and the little flags that marked the point of victory fell into the water. The action was scarce noted, ere the glittering beak of the masker shot past the eyes of the judges, who doubted for an instant on whom success had fallen. Gino was not long behind, and after him came Bartolomeo, fourth and last, in the best-contested race which had ever been seen on the waters of Venice.

When the flags fell, men held their breaths in suspense. Few knew the victor, so close had been the struggle. But a flourish of the trumpets soon commanded attention, and then a herald proclaimed, that—

"Antonio, a fisherman of the Lagunes, favored by his holy patron of the Miraculous Draught, had borne away the prize of gold—while a waterman, who wore his face concealed, but who hath trusted to the care of the blessed San Giovanni of the Wilderness, is worthy of the silver prize, and that the third had fallen to the fortunes of Gino of Calabria, a servitor of the illustrious Don Camillo Monforte, Duca di Sant' Agata, and lord of many Neapolitan seigniories."

When this formal announcement was made, there succeeded a silence like that of the tomb. Then there arose a general shout among the living mass, which bore on high the name of Antonio, as if they celebrated the success of some conqueror. All feeling of contempt was lost in the influence of his triumph. The fishermen of the Lagunes, who so lately had loaded their aged companion with contumely, shouted for his glory, with a zeal that manifested the violence of the transition from mortification to pride, and, as has ever been and ever will be the meed of success, he who was thought least likely to obtain it was most greeted with praise and adulation, when it was found that the end had disappointed expectation. Ten thousand voices were lifted, in proclaiming his skill and victory, and young and old, the fair, the gay, the noble, the winner of sequins and he who lost, struggled alike to catch a glimpse of the humble old man, who had so unexpectedly wrought this change of sentiment in the feelings of a multitude.

Antonio bore his triumph meekly. When his gondola had reached the goal, he checked its course, and, without discovering any of the usual signs of exhaustion, he remained standing, though the deep heaving of his broad and tawny chest proved that his powers had been taxed to their utmost. He smiled as the shouts arose on his ear, for praise is grateful, even to the meek; still he seemed oppressed with an emotion of a character deeper than pride. Age had somewhat dimmed his eye, but it was now full of hope. His features worked, and a single burning drop fell on each rugged cheek. The fisherman then breathed more freely.

Like his successful antagonist, the waterman of the mask betrayed none of the debility which usually succeeds great bodily exertion. His knees were motionless, his hands still grasped the oar firmly, and he too kept his feet with a steadiness that showed the physical perfection of his frame. On the other hand, both Gino and Bartolomeo sunk in their respective boats, as they gained the goal, in succession; and so exhausted was each of these renowned gondoliers, that several moments elapsed before either had breath for speech. It was during this momentary pause that the multitude proclaimed its sympathy with the victor, by their longest and loudest shouts. The noise had scarcely died away, however, before a herald summoned Antonio of the Lagunes, the masked waterman of the blessed St. John of the Wilderness, and Gino the Calabrian, to the presence of the Doge, whose princely hand was to bestow the promised prizes of the regatta.

CHAPTER X.

> We shall not spend a large expense of time,
> Before we reckon with your several loves,
> And make us even with you.—*Macbeth.*

When the three gondolas reached the side of the Bucentaur, the fisherman hung back,

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as if he distrusted his right to intrude himself into the presence of the senate. He was, however, commanded to ascend, and signs were made for his two companions to follow.

The nobles, clad in their attire of office, formed a long and imposing lane from the gangway to the stern, where the titular sovereign of that still more titular republic was placed, in the centre of the high officers of the state, gorgeous and grave in borrowed guise and natural qualities.

"Approach," said the prince, mildly, observing that the old and half-naked man that led the victors hesitated to advance. "Thou art the conqueror, fisherman, and to thy hands must I consign the prize."

Antonio bent his knee to the deck, and bowed his head lowly ere he obeyed. Then taking courage, he drew nearer to the person of the Doge, where he stood with a bewildered eye and rebuked mien, waiting the further pleasure of his superiors. The aged prince paused for stillness to succeed the slight movements created by curiosity. When he spoke, it was amid a perfect calm.

"It is the boast of our glorious republic," he said, "that the rights of none are disregarded; that the lowly receive their merited rewards as surely as the great; that St. Mark holds the balance with an even hand, and that this obscure fisherman, having deserved the honors of this regatta, will receive them with the same readiness on the part of him who bestows, as if he were the most favored follower of our own house. Nobles and burghers of Venice, learn to prize your excellent and equable laws on this occasion, for it is most in acts of familiar and common usage that the parental character of government is seen, since in matters of higher moment, the eyes of a world impel a compliance with its own opinions."

The Doge delivered these preliminary remarks in a firm tone, like one confident of his auditors' applause. He was not deceived. No sooner had he done, than a murmur of approbation passed through the assembly, and extended itself to thousands who were beyond the sound of his voice, and to more who were beyond the reach of his meaning. The senators bent their heads in acknowledgment of the justice of what their chief had uttered, and the latter, having waited to gather these signs of an approving royalty, proceeded.

"It is my duty, Antonio, and, being a duty, it hath become a pleasure, to place around thy neck this golden chain. The oar which it bears is an emblem of thy skill; and among thy associates it will be a mark of the republic's favor and impartiality, and of thy merit. Take it, then, vigorous old man, for though age hath thinned thy temples and furrowed thy cheek, it hath scarce affected thy wonderful sinews and hardy courage!"

"Highness!" observed Antonio, recoiling a pace, when he found that he was expected to stoop, in order that the bawble might be bestowed, "I am not fit to bear about me such a sign of greatness and good fortune. The glitter of the gold would mock my poverty, and a jewel, which comes from so princely a hand, would be ill-placed on a naked bosom."

This unexpected refusal caused a general surprise and a momentary pause.

"Thou hast not entered on the struggle, fisherman, without a view to its prize? But thou sayest truly, the golden ornament would, indeed, but ill befit thy condition and daily wants. Wear it for the moment, since it is meet that all should know the justice and impartiality of our decisions, and bring it to my treasurer when the sports are done; he will make such an exchange as better suits thy wishes. There is precedent for this practice, and it shall be followed."

"Illustrious highness! I did not trust my old limbs in so hard a strife without hopes of a reward. But it was not gold, nor any vanity to be seen among my equals with that glittering jewel, that led me to meet the scorn of the gondoliers, and the displeasure of the great."

"Thou art deceived, honest fisherman, if thou supposest that we regard thy just ambition with displeasure. We love to see a generous emulation among our people, and take all proper means to encourage those aspiring spirits who bring honor to a state, and fortune to our shores."

"I pretend not to place my poor thoughts against those of my prince," answered the fisherman; "my fears and shame have led me to believe that it would give more pleasure to the noble and gay had a younger and happier borne away this honor."

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"Thou must not think this. Bend, then, thy knee, that I may bestow the prize. When the sun sets, thou wilt find those in my palace who will relieve thee of the ornament at a just remuneration."

"Highness!" said Antonio, looking earnestly at the Doge, who again arrested his movement, in surprise, "I am old, and little wont to be spoilt by fortune. For my wants, the Lagunes, with the favor of the holy St. Anthony, are sufficient; but it is in thy power to make the last days of an old man happy and to have thy name remembered in many an honest and well-meant prayer. Grant me back my child, forget the boldness of a heart-broken father!"

"Is not this he who urged us with importunity concerning a youth that is gone into the service of the state?" exclaimed the prince, across whose countenance passed that expression of habitual reserve which so often concealed the feelings of the man.

"The same," returned a cold voice, which the ear of Antonio well knew came from the Signor Gradenigo.

"Pity for thy ignorance, fisherman, represses our anger. Receive thy chain, and depart."

Antonio's eye did not waver. He kneeled with an air of profound respect, and folding his hands on his bosom, he said—

"Misery has made me bold, dread Prince! What I say comes from a heavy heart, rather than from a licentious tongue, and I pray your royal ear to listen with indulgence!"

"Speak briefly, for the sports are delayed."

"Mighty Doge! riches and poverty have caused a difference in our fortunes, which knowledge and ignorance have made wider. I am rude in my discourse, and little suited to this illustrious company. But, signor, God hath given to the fisherman the same feelings, and the same love for his offspring, as he has given to a prince. Did I place dependence only on the aid of my poor learning, I should now be dumb, but there is a strength within that gives me courage to speak to the first and noblest in Venice in behalf of my child."

"Thou canst not impeach the senate's justice, old man, nor utter aught, in truth, against the known impartiality of the laws!"

"Sovrano Mio! deign to listen, and you shall hear. I am what your eyes behold—a man, poor, laborious, and drawing near to the hour when he shall be called to the side of the blessed St. Anthony of Rimini, and stand in a presence even greater than this. I am not vain enough to think that my humble name is to be found among those of the patricians who have served the republic in her wars—that is an honor which none but the great, and the noble, and the happy, can claim; but if the little I have done for my country is not in the Golden Book, it is written here," as Antonio spoke, he pointed to the scars on his half-naked form; "these are signs of the enmity of the Turk, and I now offer them as so many petitions to the bounty of the senate."

"Thou speakest vaguely. What is thy will?"

"Justice, mighty Prince. They have forced the only vigorous branch from the dying trunk—they have lopped the withering stem of its most promising shoot—they have exposed the sole companion of my labors and pleasures, the child to whom I have looked to close my eyes, when it shall please God to call me away, untaught, and young in lessons of honesty and virtue, a boy in principle as in years, to all the temptation, and sin, and dangerous companionship of the galleys!"

"Is this all? I had thought thy gondola in the decay, or thy right to use the Lagunes in question!"

"Is this all?" repeated Antonio, looking around him in bitter melancholy. "Doge of Venice, it is more than one, old, heart-stricken, and bereaved, can bear!"

"Go to; take thy golden chain and oar, and depart among thy fellows in triumph. Gladden thy heart at a victory on which thou could'st not, in reason, have counted, and leave the interests of the state to those that are wiser than thee, and more fitted to sustain its cares."

The fisherman arose with an air of rebuked submission, the result of a long life passed in the habit of political deference; but he did not approach to receive the proffered reward.

"Bend thy head, fisherman, that his highness may bestow the prize," commanded an officer.

"I ask not for gold, nor any oar, but that which carries me to the Lagunes in the

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morning, and brings me back into the canals at night. Give me my child, or give me nothing."

"Away with him!" muttered a dozen voices; "he utters sedition! let him quit the galley."

Antonio was hurried from the presence, and forced into his gondola with very unequivocal signs of disgrace. This unwonted interruption of the ceremonies clouded many a brow, for the sensibilities of a Venetian noble were quick, indeed, to reprehend the immorality of political discontent, though the conventional dignity of the class suppressed all other ill-timed exhibition of dissatisfaction.

"Let the next competitor draw near," continued the sovereign, with a composure that constant practice in dissimulation rendered easy.

The unknown waterman to whose secret favor Antonio owed his success, approached, still concealed by the licensed mask.

"Thou art the gainer of the second prize," said the prince, "and were rigid justice done, thou should'st receive the first also, since our favor is not to be rejected with impunity.—Kneel, that I may bestow the favor."

"Highness, pardon!" observed the marker, bowing with great respect, but withdrawing a single step from the offered reward; "if it be your gracious will to grant a boon, for the success of the regatta, I, too, have to pray that it may be given in another form."

"This is unusual! It is not wont that prizes, offered by the hand of a Venetian Doge, should go a-begging."

"I would not seem to press more than is respectful in this great presence. I ask but little, and, in the end, it may cost the republic less, than that which is now offered."

"Name it."

"I, too, and on my knee, in dutiful homage to the chief of the state, beg that the prayer of the old fisherman be heard, and that the father and son may be restored to each other, for the service will corrupt the tender years of the boy, and make the age of his parent miserable."

"This touches on importunity! Who art thou, that comest in this hidden manner, to support a petition once refused.

"Highness, the second victor in the ducal regatta."

"Dost trifle in thy answers? The protection of a mask, in all that does not tend to unsettle the peace of the city, is sacred. But here seemeth matter to be looked into.—Remove thy disguise, that we see thee, eye to eye."

"I have heard that he who kept civil speech, and in naught offended against the laws, might be seen at will, disguised in Venice, without question of his affairs, or name."

"Most true, in all that does not offend St. Mark. But here is a concert worthy of inquiry; I command thee, unmask."

The waterman, reading in every face around him the necessity of obedience, slowly withdrew the means of concealment, and discovered thy pallid countenance and glittering eyes of Jacopo. An involuntary movement of all near left this dreadful person standing, singly, confronted with the prince of Venice, in a circle of wondering and curious listeners.

"I know thee not!" exclaimed the Doge, with an open amazement that proved his sincerity, after regarding the other earnestly for a moment. "Thy reasons for the disguise should be better than thy reason for refusing the prize."

The Signor Gradenigo drew near to the sovereign, and whispered in his ear. When he had done, the latter cast one look, in which curiosity and aversion were in singular union at the marked countenance of the Bravo, and then he silently motioned to him to depart. The throng drew about the royal person, with instinctive readiness, closing the space in his front.

"We shall look into this at our leisure," said the Doge. "Let the festivities proceed."

Jacopo bowed low, and withdrew. As he moved along the deck of the Bucentaur, the senators made way, as if pestilence was in his path, though it was quite apparent, by the expression of their faces, that it was in obedience to a feeling of a mixed character. The avoided, but still tolerated Bravo descended to his gondola, and the usual signals were given to the multitude beneath, who believed the customary ceremonies were ended.

"Let the gondolier of Don Camillo Monforte stand forth," cried a herald, obedient to the beck of a superior.

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"Highness, here," answered Gino, troubled and hurried. . .

"Thou art of Calabria?"

"Highness, yes."

"But of long practice on our Venetian canals, or thy gondola could never have outstripped those of the readiest oarsman.—Thou servest a noble master?"

"Highness, yes."

"And it would seem that the Duca di Sant' Agata is happy in the possession of an honest and faithful follower?"

"Highness, too happy."

"Kneel, and receive the reward of thy resolution and skill."

Gino, unlike those who had preceded him, bent a willing knee to the deck, and took the prize with a low and humble inclination of the body. At this moment the attention of the spectators was drawn from the short and simple ceremony by a loud shout, which arose from the water, at no great distance from the privileged bark of the senate. A common movement drew all to the side of the galley, and the successful gondolier was quickly forgotten.

A hundred boats were moving, in a body towards the Lido, while the space they covered on the water presented one compact mass of the red caps of fishermen. In the midst of this marine picture was seen the bare head of Antonio, borne along in the floating multitude, without any effort of his own. The general impulsion was received from the vigorous arms of some thirty or forty of their number, who towed those in the rear by applying their force to three or four large gondolas in advance.

There was no mistaking the object of this singular and characteristic procession. The tenants of the Lagunes, with the fickleness with which extreme ignorance acts on human passions, had suddenly experienced a violent revolution in their feelings toward their ancient comrade. He who, an hour before, had been derided as a vain and ridiculous pretender, and on whose head bitter imprecations had been so lavishly poured, was now lauded with cries of triumph.

The gondoliers of the canals were laughed to scorn, and the ears of even the haughty nobles were not respected, as the exulting band taunted their pampered menials.

In short, by a process which is common enough with man in all the divisions and subdivisions of society, the merit of one was at once intimately and inseparably connected with the glory and exultation of all.

Had the triumph of the fisherman confined itself to this natural and commonplace exhibition, it would not have given grave offence to the vigilant and jealous power that watched over the peace of Venice. But, amid the shouts of approbation were mingled cries of censure. Words of grave import were even heard, denouncing those who refused to restore to Antonio his child; and it was whispered on the deck of the Bucentaur that, filled with the imaginary importance of their passing victory, the hardy band of rioters had dared to menace a forcible appeal to obtain what they audaciously termed the justice of the case.

This ebullition of popular feeling was witnessed by the assembled senate in ominous and brooding silence. One unaccustomed to reflection on such a subject, or unpractised in the world, might have fancied alarm and uneasiness were painted on the grave countenances of the patricians, and that the signs of the times were little favorable to the continuance of an ascendancy that was dependent more on the force of convention, that on the possession of any physical superiority. But, on the other hand, one who was capable of judging between the power of political ascendancy strengthened by its combinations and order, and the mere ebullitions of passion, however loud and clamorous, might readily have seen that the latter was not yet displayed in sufficient energy to break down the barriers which the first had erected.

The fishermen were permitted to go their way unmolested, though here and there a gondola was seen stealing towards the Lido, bearing certain of those secret agents of the police whose duty it was to forewarn the existing powers of the presence of danger. Among the latter was the boat of the wine-seller, which departed from the Piazzetta, containing a stock of his merchandise, with Annina, under the pretence of making his profit out of the present turbulent temper of their ordinary customers. In the meantime, the sports proceeded, and the momentary interruption was forgotten; or, if remembered,

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it was in a manner suited to the secret and fearful power which directed the destinies of that remarkable republic.

There was another regatta, in which men of inferior powers contended; but we deem it unworthy to detain the narrative by a description.

Though the grave tenants of the Bucentaur seemed to take an interest in what was passing immediately before their eyes, they had ears for every shout that was borne on the evening breeze from the distant Lido; and more than once the Doge himself was seen to bend his looks in that direction, in a manner which betrayed the concern that was uppermost in his mind.

Still the day passed on as usual. The conquerors triumphed, the crowd applauded, and the collected senate appeared to sympathize with the pleasures of a people, over whom they ruled with a certainty of power that resembled the fearful and mysterious march of destiny.

CHAPTER XI.

. Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?
—SHAKESPEARE.

THE evening of such a day, in a city with the habits of Venice, was not likely to be spent in the dulness of retirement. The great square of St. Mark was again filled with its and motley crowd, and the scenes already described in the opening chapters of this work, were resumed, if possible, with more apparent devotion to the levities of the hour, than on the occasion mentioned. The tumblers and jugglers renewed thetr antics, the cries of the fruitsellers and other venders of light luxuries were again mingled wieh the tones of the flute and the notes of the guitar and harp, while the idle and the busy, the thoughtless and the designing, the conspirator and the agent of the police, once more met in privileged security.

The night had advanced beyond its turn, when a gondola came sweeping through the shipping of the port, with that easy and swan-like motion, which is peculiar to its slow movement, and touched the quay with its beak, at the point where the canal of St. Mark forms its junction with the bay.

"Thou art welcome, Antonio," said one, who approached the solitary individual that had directed the gondola, when the latter had thrust the iron spike of his painter between the crevices of the stones, as gondoliers are accustomed to secure their barges: "thou art welcome, Antonio, though late."

"I begin to know the sounds of that voice though they come from a masked face," said the fisherman. "Friend, I owe my success to-day to thy kindness, and though it has not had the end for which I had both hoped and prayed, I ought not to thank thee less. Thou hast thyself been borne hard upon by the world, or thou would'st not have bethought thee of a despised old man, when the shouts of triumph were ringing in thy ear, and when thy own young blood was stirred with the feelings of pride and victory."

"Nature gives thee strong language, fisherman. I have not passed the hours, truly, in the games and levities of my years. Life has been no festa to me—but no matter. The senate was not pleased to hear of lessening the number of the galley's crew, and thou wilt bethink thee of some other reward. I have, here, the chain and golden oar in the hope that it will still be welcome."

Antonio looked amazed, but, yielding to a natural curiosity, he gazed a moment with a longing at the prize. Then, recoiling with a shudder, he uttered moodily, and with the tones of one whose determination was made: "I should think the bawble coined of my grandchild's blood. Keep it; they have trusted it to thee, for it is thine of right, and now that they refuse to hear my prayer, it will be useless to all but to him who fairly earned it."

"Thou makest no allowance, fisherman, for difference of years and for sinews that are in their vigor. Methinks that in adjudging such a prize, thought should be had to these matters, and then would'st thou be found outstripping us all. Holy St. Theodore! I passed my childhood with the oar in hand, and never before have I met one in Venice who has driven my gondola so hard! Thou touchest the water with the delicacy of a lady fingering her harp, and yet with the force of the wave rolling on the Lido!"

"I have seen the hour, Jacopo, when even thy young arm would have tired in such a

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strife between us. That was before the birth of my eldest son, who died in battle with the Ottoman, when the dear boy he left me was but an infant in arms. Thou never sawest the comely lad, good Jacopo?"

"I was not so happy, old man; but if he resembled thee, well mayst thou mourn his loss. Body of Diana! I have little cause to boast of the small advantage youth and strength gave me."

"There was a force within that bore me and the boat on—but of what use hath it been? Thy kindness, and the pain given to an old frame that hath been long racked by hardship and poverty, are both thrown away on the rocky hearts of the nobles."

"We know not yet, Antonio. The good saints will hear our prayers, when we least think they are listening. Come with me, for I am sent to seek thee."

The fisherman regarded his new acquaintance with surprise, and then turning to bestow an instant of habitual care on his boat, he cheerfully professed himself ready to proceed. The place where they stood was a little apart from the thoroughfare of the quays, and though there was a brilliant moon, the circumstance of two men, in their garbs, being there, was not likely to attract observation; but Jacopo did not appear to be satisfied with this security from remark. He waited until Antonio had left the gondola, and, then, unfolding a cloak, which had lain on his arm, he threw it, without asking permission over the shoulders of the other. A cap, like that he wore himself, was next produced, and being placed on the gray hairs of the fisherman, effectually completed his metamorphosis.

"There is no need of a mask," he said, examining his companion attentively, when his garb was accomplished. "None would know thee, Antonio, in this garb."

"And is there need of what thou hast done, Jacopo? I owe thee thanks for a well-meant, and, but for the hardness of heart of the rich and powerful, for what would have proved a great, kindness. Still I must tell thee that a mask was never yet put before my face; for what reason can there be, why one who rises with the sun to go to his toil, and who trusteth to the favor of the blessed St. Anthony for the little he hath, should go abroad like a gallant ready to steal the good name of a virgin, or a robber at night?"

"Thou knowest our Venetian custom, and it may be well to use some caution, in the business we are on."

"Thou forgettest that thy intention is yet a secret to me. I say it again, and I say it with truth and gratitude, that I owe thee many thanks, though the end is defeated, and the boy is still a prisoner in the floating-school of wickedness—but thou hast a name, Jacopo, that I could wish did not belong to thee. I find it hard to believe all that they have this day said, on the Lido, of one who has so much feeling for the weak and wronged."

The Bravo ceased to adjust the disguise of his companion, and the profound stillness which succeeded his remark proved so painful to Antonio, that he felt like one reprieved from suffocation, when he heard the deep respiration that announced the relief of his companion.

"I would not willingly say——"

"No matter," interrupted Jacopo, in a hollow voice. "No matter, fisherman; we will speak of these things on some other occasion. At present, follow, and be silent."

As he ceased, the self-appointed guide of Antonio beckoned for the latter to come on, when he led the way from the water-side. The fisherman obeyed, for little did it matter to one poor and heart-stricken as he, whither he was conducted. Jacopo took the first entrance into the court of the Doge's palace. His footstep was leisurely, and to the passing multitude they appeared like any others of the thousands who were abroad to breathe the soft air of the night or to enter into the pleasures of the piazza.

When within the dimmer and broken light of the court, Jacopo paused, evidently to scan the persons of those it contained. It is to be presumed he saw no reason to delay, for with a secret sign to his companion to follow, he crossed the area, and mounted the well-known steps, down which the head of the Faliero had rolled, and which, from the statues on the summit, are called the Giant's Stairs. The celebrated mouths of the lions were passed, and they were walking swiftly along the open gallery, when they encountered a halberdier of the ducal guard.

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"Who comes?" demanded the mercenary, throwing forward his long and dangerous weapon.

"Friends to the state and to St. Mark."

"None pass, at this hour, without the word."

Jacopo motioned to Antonio to stand fast, while he drew nearer to the halberdier and whispered. The weapon was instantly thrown up, and the sentinel again paced the long gallery, with practised indifference. The way was no sooner cleared than they proceeded. Antonio, not a little amazed at what he had already seen, eagerly followed his guide, for his heart began to beat high with an exciting, but undefined hope. He was not so ignorant of human affairs as to require to be told, that those who ruled would some time concede that in secret, which policy forbade them to yield openly. Full, therefore, of the expectation of being ushered into the presence of the Doge himself, and of having his child restored to his arms, the old man stepped lightly along the gloomy gallery, and darting through an entrance, at the heels of Jacopo, he found himself at the foot of another flight of massive steps. The route now became confused to the fisherman, for, quitting the more public vomitories of the palace, his companion held his way by a secret door, through many dimly lighted and obscure passages. They ascended and descended frequently, as often quitting or entering rooms of but ordinary dimensions and decorations, until the head of Antonio was completely turned, and he no longer knew the general direction of their course. At length they stopped, in an apartment of inferior ornaments, and of a dusky color, which the feeble light rendered still more gloomy.

"Thou art well acquainted with the dwelling of our prince," said the fisherman, when his companion enabled him to speak, by checking his swift movements. "The oldest gondolier of Venice is not more ready on the canals, than thou appearest to be among these galleries and corridors."

"'Tis my business to bring thee hither, and what I am to do, I endeavor to do well. Antonio, thou art a man that feareth not to stand in the presence of the great, as this day hath shown. Summon thy courage, for a moment of trial is before thee."

"I have spoken boldly to the Doge. Except the Holy Father, himself, what power is there on earth beside to fear?"

"Thou mayest have spoken, fisherman, too boldly. Temper thy language, for the great love not words of disrespect."

"Is truth unpleasant to them?"

"That is as may be. They love to hear their own acts praised, when their acts have merited praise, but they do not like to hear them condemned, even though they know what is said to be just."

"I fear me," said the old man, looking with simplicity at the other, "there is little difference between the powerful and the weak, when the garments are stripped from both, and the man stands naked to the eye."

"That truth may not be spoken here."

"How! Do they deny that they are Christians, and mortals, and sinners?"

"They make a merit of the first, Antonio; they forget the second, and they never like to be called the last, by any but themselves."

"I doubt, Jacobo, after all, if I get from them the freedom of the boy."

"Speak them fair, and say naught to wound their self-esteem, or to menace their authority—they will pardon much, if the last, in particular, be respected."

"But it is that authority which has taken away my child! Can I speak in favor of the power which I know to be unjust?"

"Thou must feign it, or thy suit will fail."

"I will go back to the Lagunes, good Jacobo, for this tongue of mine hath ever moved at the bidding of the heart. I fear I am too old to say that a son may righteously be torn from the father by violence. Tell them, thou, from me, that I came thus far, in order to do them respect, but, that seeing the hopelessness of beseeching further, I have gone to my nets, and to my prayers to blessed St. Anthony."

As he ceased speaking, Antonio wrung the hand of his motionless companion, and turned away, as if to retire. Two halberds fell to the level of his breast, ere his foot had quitted the marble floor, and he now saw, for the first time, that armed men crossed his passage, and that, in truth, he was a prisoner. Nature had endowed the fisherman with a quick and just perception, and long habit had given great steadiness to his nerves. When

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he perceived his real situation, instead of entering into useless remonstrance, or in any manner betraying alarm, he again turned to Jacobo with an air of patience and resignation.

"It must be that the illustrious Signori wish to do me justice," he said, smoothing the remnant of his hair, as men of his class prepare themselves for the presence of their superiors, "and it would not be decent, in an humble fisherman, to refuse them the opportunity. It would be better, however, if there were less force used here in Venice, in a matter of simple right and wrong. But the great love to show their power, and the weak must submit."

"We shall see!" answered Jacobo, who had manifested no emotion during the abortive attempt of the other to retire.

A profound silence succeeded. The halberdiers maintained their rigid attitudes, within the shadow of the wall, looking like two insensible statues, in the attire and armor of the age, while Jacobo and his companion occupied the centre of the room, with scarcely more of the appearance of consciousness and animation. It may be well to explain here to the reader some of the peculiar machinery of the state, in the country of which we write, and which is connected with the scene that is about to follow: for the name of a republic, a word which, if it mean anything, strictly implies the representation and supremacy of the general interests, but which has so frequently been prostituted to the protection and monopolies of privileged classes, may have induced him to believe that there was, at least, a resemblance between the outlines of that government, and the more just, because more popular, institutions of his own country.

In an age when rulers were profane enough to assert, and the ruled weak enough to allow, that the right of a man to govern his fellows was a direct gift from God, a departure from the bold and selfish principle, though it were only in profession, was thought sufficient to give a character of freedom and common sense to the polity of a nation. This belief is not without some justification, since it establishes, in theory at least, the foundations of government on a base sufficiently different from that which supposes all power to be the property of one, and that one to be the representative of the faultless and omnipotent Ruler of the Universe. With the first of these principles we have nothing to do, except it be to add that there are propositions so inherently false that they only require to be fairly stated to produce their own refutation; but our subject necessarily draws us into a short digression on the errors of the second, as they existed in Venice.

It is probable that when the patricians of St. Mark created a community of political rights in their own body, they believed their state had done all that was necessary to merit the high and generous title it assumed. They had innovated on a generally received principle, and they cannot claim the distinction of being either the first, or the last, who have imagined that to take the incipient steps in political improvement, is at once to reach the goal of perfection. Venice had no doctrine of divine right, and as her prince was little more than a pageant, she boldly laid claim to be called a republic. She believed that a representation of the most prominent and brilliant interests in society was the paramount object of government, and, faithful to the seductive but dangerous error, she mistook to the last collective power for social happiness.

It may be taken as a governing principle, in all civil relations, that the strong will grow stronger, and the feeble more weak, until the first become unfit to rule, or the last unable to endure. In this important truth is contained the secret of the downfall of all those states which have crumbled beneath the weight of their own abuses. It teaches the necessity of widening the foundations of society, until the base shall have a breadth capable of securing the just representation of every interest, without which the social machine is liable to interruption from its own movement, and eventually to destruction from its own excesses.

Venice, though ambitious and tenacious of the name of a republic, was, in truth, a narrow, a vulgar, and an exceedingly heartless oligarchy. To the former title she had no other claim than her denial of the naked principle already mentioned, while her practice is liable to the reproach of the two latter, in the unmanly and narrow character of

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its exclusion, in every act of her foreign policy, and in every measure of her internal police. An aristocracy must ever want the high personal feeling which often tempers despotism by the qualities of the chief, or the generous and human impulses of a popular rule. It has the merit of substituting things for men, it is true, but unhappily it substitutes the things of a few men for those of the whole. It partakes, and it always has partaken, though necessarily tempered by circumstances and the opinions of different ages, of the selfishness of all corporations, in which the responsibility of the individual, while his acts are professedly submitted to the temporizing expedients of a collective interest, is lost in the subdivision of numbers. At the period of which we write, Italy had several of these self-styled commonwealths, in not one of which, however, was there ever a fair and just confiding of power to the body of the people, though perhaps there is not one that has not been cited, sooner or later, in proof of the inability of man to govern himself! In order to demonstrate the fallacy of a reasoning, which is so fond of predicting the downfall of our own liberal system, supported by examples drawn from trans-atlantic states of the middle ages, it is necessary only to recount here, a little in detail, the forms in which power was obtained and exercised, in the most important of them all.

Distinctions in rank, as separated entirely from the will of the nation, formed the basis of Venetian polity. Authority, though divided, was not less a birthright, than in those governments in which it was openly avowed to be a dispensation of Providence. The patrician order had its high and exclusive privileges, which were guarded and maintained with a most selfish and engrossing spirit. He who was not born to govern, had little hope of ever entering into the possession of his natural rights; while he who was, by the intervention of chance, might wield a power of the most fearful and despotic character. At a certain age, all of senatorial rank (for, by a specious fallacy, nobility did not take its usual appellations) were admitted into the councils of the nation. The names of the leading families were inscribed in a register, which was well entitled the "Golden Book," and he who enjoyed the envied distinction of having an ancestor thus enrolled, could, with a few exceptions (such as that named in the case of Don Camillo), present himself in the senate, and lay claim to the honors of the "Horned Bonnet." Neither our limits, nor our object will permit a digression of sufficient length to point out the whole of the leading features of a system so vicious, and which was, perhaps, only rendered tolerable to those it governed, by the extraneous contributions of captured and subsidiary provinces, on which, in truth, as in all cases of metropolitan rule, the oppression weighed most grievously. The reader will at once see, that the very reason why the despotism of the self-styled republic was tolerable to its own citizens, was but another cause of its eventual destruction.

As the senate became too numerous to conduct, with sufficient secrecy and dispatch, the affairs of a state that pursued a policy alike tortuous and complicated, the most general of its important interests were intrusted to a council composed of three hundred of its members. In order to avoid the publicity and delay of a body large even as this, a second selection was made, which was known as the Council of Ten, and to which much of the executive power, that aristocratical jealousy withheld from the titular chief of the state, was confided. To this point the political economy of the Venetian republic, however faulty, had at least some merit for simplicity and frankness. The ostensible agents of the administration were known, and though all real responsibility to the nation was lost, in the superior influence and narrow policy of the patricians, the rulers could not entirely escape from the odium that public opinion might attach to their unjust and illegal proceedings. But a state, whose prosperity was chiefly founded on the contribution and support of dependents, and whose existence was equally menaced by its own false principles, and by the growth of other and neighboring powers, had need of a still more efficient body, in the absence of that executive which its own republican pretensions denied to Venice. A political inquisition, which came in time to be one of the most fearful engines of police ever known, was the conse-

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quence. An authority, as irresponsible as it was absolute, was periodically confined to another and still smaller body, which met and exercised its despotic and secret functions under the name of the Council of Three. The choice of these temporary rulers was decided by lot, and in a manner that prevented the result from being known to any but to their own number, and to a few of the most confidential of the more permanent officers of the government. Thus there existed, at all times, in the heart of Venice, a mysterious and despotic power, that was wielded by men who moved in society unknown, and apparently surrounded by all the ordinary charities of life; but which, in truth, was influenced by a set of political maxims, that were perhaps as ruthless, as tyrannic, and as selfish as ever were invented by the evil ingenuity of man. It was, in short, a power that could only be entrusted, without abuse, to infallible virtue and infinite intelligence, using the terms in a sense limited by human means; and yet it was here confided to men, whose title was founded on the double accident, of birth—and the colors of balls, and by whom it was wielded, without even the check of publicity.

The Council of Three met in secret, ordinarily issued its decrees without communicating with any other body, and had them enforced with a fearfulness of mystery, and a suddenness of execution, that resembled the blows of fate. The Doge himself was not superior to its authority, nor protected from its decisions, while it has been known that one of the privileged Three has been denounced by his companions. There is still in existence a long list of the state maxims which this secret tribunal recognized as its rule of conduct, and it is not saying too much to affirm that they set at defiance every other consideration but expediency,—all the recognized laws of God, and every principle of justice, which is esteemed among men. The advances of the human intellect, supported by the means of publicity, may temper the exercise of a similar irresponsible power, in our own age, but in no country has this substitution of a soulless corporation for an elective representation, been made, in which a sytem of rule has not been established, that sets at naught the laws of natural justice and the rights of the citizen. Any pretension to the contrary, by placing profession in opposition to practice, is only adding hypocrisy to usurpation.

It appears to be an unavoidable general consequence that abuses should follow, when power is exercised by a permanent and irresponsible body, from whom there is no appeal. When this power is secretly exercised, the abuses become still more grave. It is also worthy of remark, that in the nations which submit, or have submitted to these undue and dangerous influences, the pretensions to justice and generosity are of the most exaggerated character; for while the fearless democrat vents his personal complaints aloud, and the voice of the subject of professed despotism is smothered entirely, necessity itself dictates to the oligarchist the policy of seemliness as one of the conditions of his own safety. Thus Venice prided herself on the justice of St. Mark, and few states maintained a greater show, or put forth a more lofty claim to the possession of the sacred quality, than that whose real maxims of government were veiled in a mystery that even the loose morality of the age exacted.

CHAPTER XII.

A power that if but named
In casual converse, be it where it might,
The speaker lower'd, at once, his voice, his eyes,
And pointed upward as at God in Heaven.—ROGERS.

THE reader has probably anticipated that Antonio was now standing in an antechamber of the secret and stern tribunal, described in the preceding chapter. In common with all of his class, the fisherman had a vague idea of the existence and of the attributes of the council before which he was to appear; but his simple apprehension was far from comprehending the extent, or the nature, of functions that equally took cognizance of the most important interests of the republic, and of the more trifling concerns of a patrician family. While conjectures on the probable result of the expected interview were passing through his mind, an inner door opened and an attendant signed for Jacopo to advance.

The deep and imposing silence which instantly succeeded the entrance of the sum-

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moned into the presence of the Council of Three, gave time for a slight examination of the apartment and of those it contained. The room was not large for that country and climate, but rather of a size suited to the closeness of the councils that had place within its walls. The floor was tessellated with alternate pieces of black and white marble; the walls were draped in one common and sombre dress of black cloth; a single lamp of dark bronze was suspended over a solitary table in its centre, which, like every other article of the scanty furniture, had the same melancholy covering as the walls. In the angles of the room there were projecting closets, which might have been what they seemed, or merely passages into the other apartments of the palace. All the doors were concealed from casual observation by the hangings, which gave one general and chilling aspect of gloom to the whole scene. On the side of the room opposite to that on which Antonio stood, three men were seated in curule chairs; but their masks, and the drapery which concealed their forms, prevented all recognition of their persons. One of this powerful body wore a robe of crimson, as the representative that fortune had given to the select council of the Doge, and the others robes of black, being those which had drawn the lucky, or rather the unlucky balls, in the Council of Ten, itself a temporary and chance-created body of the senate. There were one or two subordinates near the table, but these, as well as the still more humble officials of the place, were hid from all ordinary knowledge by disguises similar to those of the chiefs. Jacopo regarded the scene like one accustomed to its effect, though with evident reverence and awe; but the impression on Antonio was too manifest to be lost. It is probable that the long pause which followed his introduction was intended to produce, and to note this effect, for keen eyes were intently watching his countenance during its continuance.

"Thou art called Antonio, of the Lagunes?" demanded one of the secretaries near the table, when a sign had been secretly made from the crimson member of that fearful tribunal, to proceed.

"A poor fisherman, eccellenza, who owes much to blessed Saint Antonio of the Miraculous Draught."

"And thou hast a son who bears thine own name, and who follows the same pursuit!"

"It is the duty of a Christian to submit to the will of God! My boy has been dead twelve years come the day when the republic's galleys chased the Infidel from Corfu to Candia. He was slain, noble Signor, with many others of his calling, in that bloody fight."

There was a movement of surprise among the clerks, who whispered together, and appeared to examine the papers in their hands, with some haste and confusion. Glances were sent back at the judges, who sat motionless, wrapped in the impenetrable mystery of their functions. A secret sign, however, soon caused the armed attendants of the place to lead Antonio and his companion from the room.

"Here is some inadvertency!" said a stern voice from one of the masked Three, so soon as the fall of the footsteps of those who retired was no longer audible. "It is not seemly that the inquisition of St. Mark should show this ignorance."

"It touches merely the family of an obscure fisherman, illustrious Signor," returned the trembling dependant; "and it may be that his art would wish to deceive us in the opening interrogatories."

"Thou art in error," interrupted another of the Three. "The man is named Antonio Vecchio, and as he sayeth, his only child died in the hot affair with the Ottoman. He of whom there is question is a grandson, and is still a boy."

"The noble Signor is right," returned the clerk: "In the hurry of affairs we have misconceived a fact, which the wisdom of the council has been quick to rectify. St. Mark is happy in having among his proudest and oldest names senators who enter thus familiarly into the interests of his meanest children!"

"Let the man be again introduced," resumed the judge, slightly bending his head to the compliment. "These accidents are unavoidable in the press of affairs."

The necessary order was given, and Antonio, with his companion constantly at his elbow, was brought once more into the presence.

"Thy son died in the service of the republic, Antonio?" demanded the secretary.

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"Signor, he did. Holy Maria have pity on his early fate, and listen to my prayers! So good a child and so brave a man can have no great need of masses for his soul, or his death would have been doubly grievous to me, since I am too poor to buy them."

"Thou hast a grandson?"

"I had one, noble senator; I hope he still lives."

"He is not with thee in thy labors on the Lagunes?"

"San Teodoro grant that he were! He is taken, Signor, with many more of tender years, into the galleys, whence may our Lady give him a safe deliverance! If your eccellenza has an opportunity to speak with the general of the galleys, or with any other who may have authority in such a matter, on my knees, I pray you to speak in behalf of the child, who is a good and pious lad, that seldom casts a line into the water, without an ave or a prayer to St. Anthony, and who has never given me uneasiness, until he fell into the grip of St. Mark."

"Rise—This it not the affair in which I have to question thee. Thou hast this day spoken of thy prayer to our most illustrious prince, the Doge?"

"I have prayed his highness to give the boy liberty."

"And this thou hast done openly, and with little deference to the high dignity and sacred character of the chief of the republic?"

"I did it like a father and a man. If but half what they say of the justice and kindness of the state were true, his highness would have heard me as a father and a man."

A slight movement among the fearful Three caused the secretary to pause; when he saw, however, that his superiors chose to maintain their silence, he continued—

"This didst thou once in public and among the senators, but when repulsed, as urging a petition both out of place and out of reason, thou soughtest other to prefer thy request?"

"True, illustrious Signor."

"Thou camest among the gondoliers of the regatta in an unseemly garb, and placed thyself foremost with those who contended for the favor of the senate and its prince?"

"I came in the garb which I wear before the Virgin and St. Antonio, and if I was foremost in the race, it was more owing to the goodness and favor of the man at my side, than any virtue which is still left in these withered sinews and dried bones. San Marco remember him in his need, for the kind wish, and soften the hearts of the great to hear the prayer of a childless parent!"

There was another slight expression of surprise, or curiosity, among the inquisitors, and once more the secretary suspended his examination.

"Thou hearest, Jacopo," said one of the Three. "What answer dost thou make the fisherman?"

"Signor, he speaketh truth."

"And thou hast dared to trifle with the pleasures of the city, and to set at naught the wishes of the Doge!"

"If it be a crime, illustrious senator, to have pitied an old man who mourned for his offspring, and to have given up my own solitary triumph to his love for the boy, I am guilty."

There was a long and silent pause after this reply. Jacopo had spoken with habitual reverence, but with the grave composure that appeared to enter deeply into the composition of his character. The paleness of the cheek was the same, and the glowing eye, which so singularly lighted and animated a countenance that possessed a hue not unlike that of death, scarce varied its gaze, while he answered. A secret sign caused the secretary to proceed with his duty.

"And thou owest thy success in the regatta, Antonio, to the favor of thy competitor—he who is now with thee, in the presence of the council?"

"Under St. Theodore and St. Antonio, the city's patron and my own."

"And thy whole desire was to urge again thy rejected petition in behalf of the young sailor?"

"Signor, I had no other. What is the vanity of a triumph among the gondoliers, or the bawble of a mimic oar and chain, to one of my years and condition?"

"Thou forgettest that the oar and chain are gold?"

"Excellent gentlemen, gold cannot heal the wounds which misery has left on a heavy heart. Give me back the child, that my eyes may not be closed by strangers, and that I

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may speak good council into his young ears, while there is hope my words may be remembered, and I care not for all the metals of the Rialto! Thou mayest see that I utter no vain vaunt, by this jewel, which I offer to the nobles, with the reverence due to their greatness and wisdom."

When the fisherman had done speaking, he advanced, with the timid step of a man unaccustomed to move in superior presences, and laid upon the dark cloth of the table a ring that sparkled with, what at least seemed to be, very precious stones. The astonished secretary raised the jewel, and held it in suspense before the eyes of the judges.

"How is this?" exclaimed he of the Three, who had oftenest interfered in the examination; "that seemeth the pledge of our nuptials!"

"It is no other, illustrious senator: with this ring did the Doge wed the Adriatic, in the presence of the ambassadors and the people."

"Hadst thou aught to do with this also, Jacopo?" sternly demanded the judge.

The Bravo turned his eye on the jewel with a look of interest, but his voice maintained its usual depth and steadiness as he answered,

"Signor, no—until now, I knew not the fortune of the fisherman."

A sign to the secretary caused him to resume his questions.

"Thou must account, and clearly account, Antonio," he said, "for the manner in which this sacred ring came into thy possesion; hadst thou any one to aid thee in obtaining it?"

"Signor, I had."

"Name him, at once, that we take measures for his security."

"'Twill be useless, Signor; he is far above the power of Venice."

"What meanest thou, fellow? None are superior to the right and the force of the republic that dwell within her limits. Answer without evasion, as thou valuest thy person."

"I should prize that which is of little value, Signor, and be guilty of a great folly, as well as of a great sin, were I to deceive you, to save a body old and worthless as mine from stripes. If your eccellenzas are willing to hear, you will find that I am no less willing to tell the manner in which I got the ring."

"Speak, then, and trifle not."

"I know not, Signori, whether you are used to hearing untruths, that you caution me so much not to deal with them; but we of the Lagunes are not afraid to say what we have seen and done, for most of our business is with the winds and waves, which take their orders from God himself. There is a tradition, Signori, among us fishermen, that in times past, one of our body brought up from the bay the ring with which the Doge is accustomed to marry the Adriatic. A jewel of that value was of little use to one who casts his nets daily for bread and oil, and he brought it to the Doge, as became a fisherman, into whose hands the saints had thrown a prize to which he had no title, as it were to prove his honesty. This act of our companion is much spoken of on the Lagunes and at the Lido, and it is said there is a noble painting done by some of our Venetian masters, in the halls of the palace, which tells the story as it happened; showing the prince on his throne, and the lucky fisherman with his naked legs, rendering back to his highness that which had been lost. I hope there is foundation for this belief, Signori, which greatly flatters our pride, and is not without use in keeping some among us truer to the right, and better favored in the eyes of St. Anthony, than might otherwise be."

"The fact was so."

"And the painting, excellent signor? I hope our vanity has not deceived us concerning the picture, either?"

"The picture you mention is to be seen within the palace."

"Corpo di Bacco! I have had my misgivings on that point, for it is not common that the rich and the happy should take such note of what the humble and the poor have done. Is the work from the hands of the great Tiziano himself, eccellenza?"

"It is not; one of little name hath put his pencil to the canvas."

"They say that Tiziano had the art of giving to his works the look and richness of flesh, and one would think that a just man might find, in the honesty of the poor fisherman, a color bright enough to have satisfied even his eye. But it may be that the senate

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saw danger in thus flattering us of the Lagunes."

"Proceed with the account of thine own fortune with the ring."

"Illustrious nobles, I have often dreamed of the luck of my fellow of the old times; and more than once have I drawn the nets with an eager hand in my sleep, thinking to find that very jewel entangled in its meshes, or embowelled by some fish. What I have so often fancied has at last happened. I am an old man, signori, and there are few pools or banks between Fusina and Giorgio, that my lines or my nets have not fathomed or covered. The spot to which the Bucentaur is wont to steer in these ceremonies is well known to me, and I had a care to cover the bottom round about with all my nets in the hope of drawing up the ring. When his highness cast the jewel, I dropped a buoy to mark the spot—signori, this is all—my accomplice was St. Anthony."

"For doing this you had a motive?"

"Holy Mother of God! Was it not sufficient to get back my boy from the gripe of the galleys?" exclaimed Antonio, with an energy and a simplicity that are often found to be in the same character. "I thought that if the Doge and the senate were willing to cause pictures to be painted, and honors to be given to one poor fisherman, for the ring, they might be glad to reward another, by releasing a lad who can be of no great service to the republic, but who is all to his parent."

"Thy petition to his highness, thy strife in the regatta, and thy search for the ring, had the same object?"

"To me, signor, life has but one."

There was a slight but suppressed movement among the council.

"When thy request was refused by his highness, as ill-timed——"

"Ah! eccellenza, when one has a white head and a failing arm, he cannot stop to look for the proper moment in such a cause!" interrupted the fisherman, with a gleam of that impetuosity which forms the true base of Italian character.

"When thy request was denied, and thou hadst refused the reward of the victor, thou wentest among thy fellows and fedest their ears with complaints of the injustice of St. Mark, and of the senate's tyranny?"

"Signor, no. I went away sad and heartbroken, for I had not thought the Doge and nobles would have refused a successful gondolier so light a boon."

"And this thou didst not hesitate to proclaim among the fishermen and idlers of the Lido?"

"Eccellenza, it was not needed—my fellows knew my unhappiness, and tongues were not wanting to tell the worst."

"There was a tumult, with thee at its head, and sedition was uttered, with much vain-boasting of what the fleet of the Lagunes could perform against the fleet of the republic."

"There is little difference, signor, between the two, except that the men of the one go in gondolas with nets, and the men of the other are in the galleys of the state. Why should brothers seek each other's blood?"

The movement among the judges was more manifest than ever. They whispered together, and a paper containing a few lines, written rapidly in pencil, was put into the hands of the examining secretary.

"Thou didst address thy fellows and spakest openly of thy fancied wrongs; thou didst comment on the laws which require the services of the citizens, when the republic is compelled to send forth a fleet against its enemies."

"It is not easy to be silent, signor, when the heart is full."

"And there was consultation among thee of coming to the palace in a body, and of asking the discharge of thy grandson from the Doge, in the name of the rabble of the Lido."

"Signor, there were some generous enough to make the offer, but others were of advice it would be well to reflect before they took so bold a measure."

"And thou—what was thine own counsel on that point?"

"Eccellenza, I am old, and though unused to be thus questioned by illustrious senators, I had seen enough of the manner in which St. Mark governs, to believe a few unarmed fishermen and gondoliers would not be listened to with——"

"Ha! Did the gondoliers become of thy party! I should have believed them jealous, and displeased with the triumph of one who was not of their body."

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"A gondolier is a man, and though they had the feelings of human nature on being beaten, they had also the feelings of human nature when they heard that a father was robbed of his son,—Signor," continued Antonio, with great earnestness and a singular simplicity, "there will be great discontent on the canals, if the galleys sail with the boy aboard them!"

"Such is thy opinion—were the gondoliers on the Lido numerous?"

"When the sports ended, eccellenza, they came over by hundreds, and I will do the generous fellows the justice to say that they had forgotten their want of luck in the love justice. Diamine! these gondoliers are not so bad a class as some pretend, but they are men like ourselves, and can feel for a Christian as well as another!"

The secretary paused, for his task was done; and a deep silence pervaded the gloomy apartment. After a short pause one of the Three resumed—

"Antonio Vecchio," he said, "thou hast served thyself in these said galleys, to which thou now seemest so averse—and served bravely, as I learn?"

"Signor, I have done my duty by St. Mark. I played my part against the Infidel, but it was after my beard was grown, and at an age when I had learnt to know good from evil. There is no duty more cheerfully performed by us all than to defend the islands and the Lagunes against the enemy."

"And all the republic's dominions.—Thou canst make no distinctions between any of the rights of the state."

"There is a wisdom granted to the great, which God hath denied the poor and the weak, Signor. To me it does not seem clear that Venice, a city built on a few islands, hath any more right to carry her rule into Crete or Candia than the Turk hath to come here,"

"How! Dost thou dare, on the Lido, to question the claim of the republic to her conquests! or do the irreverent fishermen dare thus to speak lightly of her glory!"

"Eccellenza, I know little of rights that come by violence. God hath given us the Lagunes, but I know not that he has given us more. This glory of which you speak may sit lightly on the shoulders of a senator, but it weighs heavily on a fisherman's heart."

"Thou speakest, bold man, of that which thou dost not comprehend."

"It is unfortunate, Signor, that the power to understand hath not been given to those who have so much power to suffer."

An anxious pause succeeded this reply.

"Thou mayest withdraw, Antonio," said he, who apparently presided in the dread councils of the Three. "Thou wilt not speak of what has happened, and thou wilt await the inevitable justice of St. Mark, in full confidence of its execution."

"Thanks, illustrious senator; I will obey your eccellenza; but my heart is full, and I would fain say a few words concerning the child, before I quit this noble company."

"Thou mayest speak—and here thou mayest give free vent to all thy wishes, or to all thy griefs, if any thou hast. St. Mark has no greater pleasure than to listen to the wishes of his children."

"I believe they have reviled the republic in calling its chiefs heartless and sold to ambition!" said the old man, with generous warmth, disregarding the stern rebuke which gleamed in the eye of Jacopo. "A senator is but a man, and there are fathers and children among them as among us of the Lagunes."

"Speak, but refrain from seditious or discreditable discourse," uttered a secretary, in a half-whisper. "Proceed."

"I have little now to offer, Signori; I am not used to boast of my services to the state, excellent gentlemen, but there is a time when human modesty must give way to human nature. These scars were got in one of the proudest days of St. Mark, and in the foremost of all the galleys that fought among the Greek islands. The father of my boy wept over me then, us I have since wept over his own son—yes!—I might be ashamed to own it among men, but if the truth must be spoken, the loss of the boy has drawn bitter tears from me in the darkness of night, and in the solitude of the Lagunes. I lay many weeks, signori, less a man than a corpse, and when I got back again to my nets and my toil, I did not withhold my son from the call of the republic. He went in my place to meet the Infidel—a service from which he never came back. This was the duty of men who had grown in experience, and who were

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not to be deluded into wickedness by the evil company of the galleys. But this calling of children into the snares of the devil grieves a father, and—I will own the weakness, if such it be—I am not of a courage and pride to send forth my own flesh and blood into the danger and corruption of war and evil society, as in days when the stoutness of the heart was like the stoutness of the limbs. Give me back, then, my boy, till he has seen my old head laid beneath the sands, and until, by the aid of blessed St. Anthony, and such councils as a poor man can offer, I may give him more steadiness in his love of the right, and until I may have so shaped his life, that he will not be driven about by every pleasant or treacherous wind that may happen to blow upon his bark. Signori, you are rich, and powerful, and honored, and though you may be placed in the way of temptation to do wrongs that are suited to your high names and illustrious fortunes, ye know little of the trials of the poor. What are the temptations of the blessed Saint Anthony himself to those of the evil company of the galleys! And now, Signori, though you may be angry to hear it, I will say, that when an aged man has no other kin on earth, or none so near as to feel the glow of the thin blood of the poor than one poor boy, St. Mark would do well to remember that even a fisherman of the Lagunes can feel as well as the Doge on his throne. This much I say, illustrious senators, in sorrow and not in anger; for I would get back the child, and die in peace with my superiors as with my equals."

"Thou mayest depart," said one of the Three.

"Not yet, signor; I have still more to say of the men of the Lagunes, who speak with loud voices concerning this dragging of boys into the service of the galleys."

"We will hear their opinions."

"Noble gentlemen, if I were to utter all they have said, word for word, I might do some disfavor to your ears! Man is man, though the Virgin and the saints listen to his aves and prayers from beneath a jacket of serge and a fisherman's cap. But I know too well my duty to the senate to speak so plainly. But, signori, they say, saving the bluntness of their language, that St. Mark should have ears for the meanest of his people as well as for the richest noble; and that not a hair should fall from the head of a fisherman, without its being counted as if it were a lock from beneath the horned bonnet; and that where God hath not made marks of his displeasure, man should not."

"Do they dare to reason thus?"

"I know not if it be reason, illustrious signor, but it is what they say, and, eccellenza, it is holy truth. We are poor workmen of the Lagunes, who rise with the day to cast our nets, and return at night to hard beds and harder fare; but with this we might be content, did the senate count us as Christians and men. That God hath not given to all the same chances in life, I well know, for it often happens that I draw an empty net, when my comrades are groaning with the weight of their draughts; but this is done to punish my sins, or to humble my heart, whereas it exceeds the power of man to look into the secrets of the soul, or to foretell the evil of the still innocent child. Blessed St. Anthony knows how many years of suffering this visit to the galleys may cause to the child in the end. Think of these things, I pray you, signori, and send men of tried principles to the wars."

"Thou mayest retire," rejoined the judge.

"I should be sorry that any who cometh of my blood," continued the inattentive Antonio, "should be the cause of ill-will between them them that rule and them that are born to obey. But nature is stronger even than the law, and I should discredit her feelings were I to go without speaking as becomes a father. Ye have taken my child and sent him to serve the state at the hazard of body and soul, without giving opportunity for a parting kiss or a parting blessing—ye have used my flesh and blood as ye would use the wood of the arsenal, and sent it forth upon the sea as if it were the insensible metal of the balls ye throw against the Infidel. Ye have shut your ears to my prayers, as if they were words uttered by the wicked, and when I have exhorted you on my knees, wearied my stiffened limbs to do ye pleasure, rendered ye the jewel which St. Anthony gave to my net, that it might soften your hearts, and reasoned with you calmly on the nature of your acts, you turn from me coldly, as if I

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were unfit to stand forth in defence of the offspring that God hath left my age! This is not the boasted justice of St. Mark, Venetian senators, but hardness of heart, and a wasting of the means of the poor, that would ill become the most grasping Hebrew of the Rialto!"

"Hast thou aught more to urge, Antonio?" asked the judge, with the wily design of unmasking the fisherman's entire soul.

"Is it not enough, Signor, that I urge my years, my poverty, my scars, and my love for the boy? I know ye not, but though ye are hid behind the folds of your robes and masks, still must ye be men. There may be among ye a father, or perhaps some one who hath a still more sacred charge, the child of a dead son. To him I speak. In vain ye talk of justice when the weight of your power falls on them least able to bear it; and though ye may delude yourselves, the meanest gondolier of the canal knows——"

He was stopped from uttering more by his companion, who rudely placed a hand on his mouth.

"Why hast thou presumed to stop the complaints of Antonio?" sternly demanded the judge.

"It was not decent, illustrious senators, to listen to such disrespect in so noble a presence," Jacopo answered, bending reverently as he spoke. "This old fisherman, dread Signori, is warmed by love for his offspring, and he will utter that which, in his cooler moments, he will repent."

"St. Mark fears not the truth! If he has more to say, let him declare it."

But the excited Antonio began to reflect. The flush which had ascended to his weather-beaten cheek disappeared, and his naked breast ceased to heave. He stood like one rebuked, more by his discretion than his conscience, with a calmer eye, and a face that exhibited the composure of his years, and the respect of his condition—

"If I have offended, great patricians," he said, more mildly, "I pray you to forget the zeal of an ignorant old man, whose feelings are master of his breeding, and who knows less how to render the truth agreeable to noble ears than to utter it."

"Thou mayest depart."

The armed attendants advanced, and, obedient to a sign from the secretary, they led Antonio and his companion through the door by which they had entered. The other officials of the place followed, and the secret judges were left by themselves in the chamber of doom.

CHAPTER XIII.

O! the days that we have seen.—SHELTON.

A PAUSE like that which accompanies self-contemplation, and perhaps conscious distrust of purpose, succeeded. Then the Three arose together, and began to lay aside the instruments of their disguise. When the masks were removed, they exposed the grave visages of men in the decline of life, athwart which worldly cares and worldly passions had drawn those deep lines, which no subsequent ease or recognition can erase. During the process of unrobing neither spoke, for the affair, on which they had just been employed, caused novel and disagreeable sensations to them all. When they were delivered from their superfluous garments and their masks, however, they drew near the table, and each sought that relief for his limbs and person which was natural to the long restraint he had undergone.

"There are letters from the French king intercepted," said one, after time had permitted them to rally their thoughts;—"it would appear they treat of the new intentions of the emperor."

"Have they been restored to the ambassador? or are the originals to go before the senate?" demanded another.

"On that we must take counsel at our leisure. I have naught else to communicate, except that the order given to intercept the messenger of the Holy See hath failed of its object."

"Of this the secretaries advertised me. We must look into the negligence of the agents, for there is good reason to believe much useful knowledge would have come from that seizure."

"As the attempt is already known and much spoken of, care must be had to issue orders for the arrest of the robbers, else may the republic fall into disrepute with its

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friends. There are names on our list which might be readily marked for punishment, for that quarter of our patrimony is never in want of proscribed, to conceal an accident of this nature."

"Good heed will be had to this, since, as you say, the affair is weighty. The government or the individual that is negligent of reputation cannot expect long to retain the respect of its equals."

"The ambition of the House of Hapsburg robs me of my sleep!" exclaimed the other, throwing aside some papers, over which his eye had glanced in disgust. "Holy Saint Theodore! what a scourge to the race is the desire to augment territories, and to extend an unjust rule, beyond the boundaries of reason and nature! Here have we, in Venice, been in undisputed possession of provinces that are adapted to our institutions, convenient to our wants and agreeable to our desires for ages—provinces that were gallantly won by our ancestors, and which cling to us as habits linger in our age; and yet are they become objects of a covetous ambition to our neighbor, under a vain pretext of a policy, that I fear is strengthened by our increasing weakness. I sicken, signori, of my esteem for men as I dive deeper into their tempers and desires, and often wish myself a dog as I study their propensities. In his appetite for power, is not the Austrian the most rapacious of all the princes of the earth?"

"More so, think you, worthy signor, than the Castilian? You overlook the unsatiated desire of the Spanish king to extend his sway in Italy."

"Hapsburg or Bourbon—Turk or Englishman—they all seem actuated by the same fell appetite for dominion; and now that Venice hath no more to hope, than to preserve her present advantages, the least of all our enjoyments becomes a subject of covetous envy to our enemies. There are passions to weary one of an interference with governments, and to send him to his cord of penitence and the cloisters!"

"I never listen to your observations, signor, without quitting the chamber an edified man! Truly this desire in the strangers to trespass on our privileges, and it may be well said, privileges which have been gained by our treasures and our blood, becomes more manifest daily. Should it not be checked, St. Mark will be stripped, in the end, of even a landing-place for a gondola on the main."

"The leap of the winged lion is much curtailed, excellent sir, or these things might not be! It is no longer in our power to persuade, or to command, as of old, and our canals begin to be encumbered with slimy weeds, instead of well-freighted argosies and swift-sailing feluccas."

"The Portuguese hath done us irretrievable harm, for without his African discoveries we might yet have retained the traffic in Indian commodities. I cordially dislike the mongrel race, being, as it is, half Gothic and half Moorish!"

"I trust not myself to think of their origin or of their deeds, my friends, lest prejudice should kindle feelings unbecoming a man and a Christian.—How now, Signor Gradenigo; thou art thoughtful?"

The third member of the secret council, who had not spoken since the disappearance of the accused, and who was no other than the reader's old acquaintance of the name mentioned, slowly lifted his head, from a meditative position, at this address.

"The examination of the fisherman hath recalled scenes of my boyhood," he answered, with a touch of nature, that seldom found place in that chamber.

"I heard thee say that he was thy foster-brother," returned the other, struggling to conceal a gape.

"We drank of the same milk, and, for the first years of life, we sported at the same games."

"These imaginary kindred often give great uneasiness. I am glad your trouble hath no other source, for I had heard that the young heir of your house hath shown a prodigal disposition of late, and I feared that matter might have come to your knowledge, as one of the council, that a father might not wish to learn."

The selfish features of the Signor Grandenigo instantly underwent a change. He glanced curiously, and with a strong distrust, but in a covert manner, at the fallen eyes of his two companions, anxious to penetrate their secret thoughts ere he ventured to expose his own.

"Is there aught of complaint against the

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youth?" he demanded, in a voice of hesitation. "You understand a father's interest, and will not conceal the truth."

"Signor, you know that the agents of the police are active, and little that comes to their knowledge fails to reach the ears of the council. But, at the worst, the matter is not of life or death. It can only cost the inconsiderate young man a visit to Dalmatia, or an order to waste the summer at the foot of the Alps."

"Youth is the season of indiscretion, as ye know, signori," returned the father, breathing more freely, "and as none become old that have not been young, I have little need to awaken your recollection of its weaknesses. I trust my son is incapable of designing aught against the republic?"

"Of that he is not suspected." A slight expression of irony crossed the features of the old senator, as he spoke. "But he is represented as aiming too freely at the person and wealth of your ward; and that she, who is the especial care of St. Mark, is not to be solicited without the consent of the senate, is an usage well known to one of its most ancient and most honorable members."

"Such is the law, and none coming of me shall show it disrespect. I have preferred my claims to that connection, openly, but with diffidence; and I await the decision of the state, in respectful confidence."

His associates bowed in courteous acknowledgment of the justice of what he said, and of the loyalty of his conduct, but it was in the manner of men too long accustomed to duplicity, to be easily duped.

"None doubt it, worthy Signor Gradenigo, for thy faith to the state is ever quoted as a model for the young, and as a subject for the approbation of the more experienced. Hast thou any communications to make on the interest of the young heiress, thyself?"

"I am pained to say, that the deep obligation conferred by Don Camillo Monforte seems to have wrought upon her youthful imagination, and I apprehend that, in disposing of my ward, the state will have to contend with the caprice of a female mind. The waywardness of that age will give more trouble, than the conduct of far graver matters."

"Is the lady attended by suitable companions, in her daily life?"

"Her companions are known to the senate. In so grave an interest, I would not act without their authority and sanction. But the affair hath great need of delicacy in its government. The circumstance that so much of my ward's fortune lies in the states of the Church, renders it necessary to await the proper moment for disposing of her rights, and of transferring their substance within the limits of the republic, before we proceed to any act of decision. Once assured of her wealth, she may be disposed of as seemeth best to the welfare of the state, without further delay."

"The lady hath a lineage and riches, and an excellence of person, that might render her of great account in some of these knotty negotiations, which so much fetter our movements of late. The time hath been, when a daughter of Venice, not more fair, was wooed to the bed of a sovereign."

"Signor, those days of glory and greatness exist no longer. Should it be thought expedient to overlook the natural claims of my son, and to bestow my ward to the advantage of the republic, the most that can be expected through her means is a favorable concession in some future treaty, or a new prop to some of the many decaying interests of the city. In this particular, she may be rendered of as much, or even of more use, than the oldest and wisest of our body. But that her will may be free, and the child may have no obstacles to her happiness, it will be necessary to make a speedy determination of the claim preferred by Don Camillo. Can we do better than to recommend a compromise, that he may return without delay to his own Calabria?"

"The concern is weighty, and it demands deliberation."

"He complains of our tardiness already, and not without show of reason. It is five years since the claim was first preferred."

"Signor Gradenigo, it is for the vigorous and healthful to display their activity, the aged and the tottering must move with caution. Were we, in Venice, to betray precipitation in so weighty a concern, without seeing an immediate interest in the judgment, we should trifle with a gale of fortune that every sirocco will not blow into the canals. We must have terms with the lord of

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Sant' Agata, or we greatly slight our own advantage."

"I hinted of the matter to your eccellenzas, as a consideration for your wisdom; methinks it will be something gained to remove one so dangerous, from the recollection, and from before the eyes, of a lovesick maiden."

"Is the damsel so amorous?"

"She is of Italy, signor, and our sun bestows warm fancies and fervent minds."

"Let her to the confessional and her prayers! The godly prior of St. Mark will discipline her imagination, till she shall conceit the Neapolitan a Moor, and an infidel. Just San Teodoro, forgive me! But thou canst remember the time, my friend, when the penance of the Church was not without service, on thine own fickle tastes and truant practices."

"The Signor Gradenigo was a gallant in his time," observed the third, "as all well know who travelled in his company. Thou wert much spoken of at Versailles and at Vienna,—nay, thou canst not deny thy vogue to one who, if he hath no other merit, hath a memory."

"I protest against these false recollections," rejoined the accused, a withered smile lighting his faded countenance; "we have been young, signori; but among us all, I never knew a Venetian of more general fashion and of better report, especially with the dames of France, than he who has just spoken."

"Account it not—account it not—'twas the weakness of youth and the use of the times!—I remember to have seen thee, Enrico, at Madrid, and a gayer or more accomplished gentleman was not known at the Spanish court."

"Thy friendship blinded thee—I was a boy and full of spirits; no more, I may assure thee. Didst hear of my affair with the mousquetaire, when at Paris?"

"Did I hear of the general war?—Thou art too modest, to raise this doubt of a meeting that occupied the coteries for a month, as it had been a victory of the powers! Signor Gradenigo, it was a pleasure to call him countryman at that time, for I do assure thee, a sprightlier or a more gallant gentleman did not walk the terrace."

"Thou tellest me of what my own eyes have been a witness. Did I not arrive when men's voices spoke of nothing else?—A beautiful court and a pleasant capital were those of France in our day, signori."

"None pleasanter, or of greater freedom of intercourse—St. Mark aid me with his prayers! The many pleasant hours that I have passed between the Marais and the Chateau! Didst ever meet La Comtesse de Mignon in the gardens?"

"Zitto—thou growest loquacious, caro; nay, she wanted not for grace and affability, that I will say. In what a manner they played in the houses of resort at that time!"

"I know it to my cost. Will you lend me your belief, dear friends? I arose from the table of La Belle Duchesse de ————, the loser of a thousand sequins, and to this hour it seemeth but a moment that I was occupied."

"I remember the evening.—Thou wert seated between the wife of the Spanish ambassador and a miladi of England. Thou wert playing at rouge-et-noir, in more ways than one, for thy eyes were on thy neighbors instead of thy cards—Giulio, I would have paid half the loss to have read the next epistle of the worthy senator thy father!"

"He never knew it—he never knew it—we had our friends on the Rialto, and the account was settled a few years later. Thou wast well with Ninon, Enrico?"

"A companion of her leisure, and one who basked in the sunshine of her wit."

"Nay, they said thou wert of more favor ——"

"Mere gossip of the salons. I do protest, gentlemen—not that others were better received—but idle tongues will have their discourse!"

"Wert thou of the party, Alessandro, that went in a fit of gayety from country to country, till it numbered ten courts at which it appeared in as many weeks?"

"Was I not its mover? What a memory art thou getting? 'Twas for a hundred golden louis, and it was bravely won by an hour. A postponement of the reception by the elector of Bavaria, went near to defeat us, but we bribed the groom of the chambers, as thou mayest remember, and got into the presence as it were by accident."

"Was that held to be sufficient?"

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"That was it, for our terms mentioned the condition of holding discourse with ten sovereigns, in as many weeks, in their own palaces. Oh! it was fairly won; and I may say that it was as gayly expended!"

"For the latter will I vouch, since I never quitted thee while a piece of it all remained. There are divers means of dispensing gold in those northern capitals, and the task was quickly accomplished. They are pleasant countries for a few years of youth and idleness!"

"It is a pity that their climates are so rude."

A slight and general shudder expressed their Italian sympathy, but the discourse did not the less proceed.

"They might have a better sun, and a clearer sky, but there is excellent cheer, and no want of hospitality," observed the Signor Gradenigo, who maintained his full share of the dialogue, though we have not found it necessary to separate sentiments that were so common among the different speakers. "I have seen pleasant hours even with the Genoese, though their town hath a cast of reflection and sobriety that is not always suited to the dispositions of youth."

"Nay, Stockholm and Copenhagen have their pleasures, too, I do assure thee. I passed a season between them. Your Dane is a good joker and a hearty bottle companion."

"In that the Englishman surpasseth all! If I were to relate their powers of living in this manner, dear friends, ye would discredit me. That which I have seen often seemeth impossible even to myself. 'Tis a gloomy abode, and one that we of Italy little like, in common."

"Name it not in comparison with Holland —wert ever in Holland, friends?—didst ever enjoy the fashion of Amsterdam and the Hague? I remember to have heard a young Roman urge a friend to pass a winter there; for the witty rogue termed it the beau ideal of the land of petticoats!"

The three old Italians, in whom this sally excited a multitude of absurd recollections and pleasant fancies, broke out into a general and hearty fit of laughter. The sound of their cracked merriment, echoing in that gloomy and solemn room, suddenly recalled them to the recollection of their duties. Each listened an instant, as if in expectation that some extraordinary consequence was to follow so extraordinary an interruption of the usual silence of the place, like a child whose truant propensities were about to draw detection on his offence,—and then the principal of the council furtively wiped the tears from his eyes, and resumed his gravity.

"Signori," he said, fumbling in a bundle of papers, "we must take up the matter of the fisherman—but we will first inquire into the circumstance of the signet left, the past night, in the lion's mouth. Signor Gradenigo, you were charged with the examination."

"The duty hath been executed, noble sirs, and with a success I had not hoped to meet with. Haste, at our last meeting, prevented a perusal of the paper to which it was attached, but it will now be seen that the two have a connection. Here is an accusation which charges Don Camillo Monforte with a design to bear away, beyond the power of the senate, the Donna Violetta, my ward, in order to possess her person and riches. It speaketh of proofs in possession of the accuser, as if he were an agent intrusted by the Neapolitan. As a pledge of his truth, I suppose, for there is no mention made by any other use, he sends the signet of Don Camillo himself, which cannot have been obtained without that noble's confidence."

"Is it certain that he owns the ring?"

"Of that am I well assured. You know I am especially charged with conducting his personal demand with the senate, and frequent interviews have given me opportunity to note that he was wont to wear a signet, which is now wanting. My jeweller of the Rialto hath sufficiently identified this, as the missing ring."

"Thus far it is clear, though there is an obscurity in the circumstance that the signet of the accused should be found with the accusation, which being unexplained, renders the charge vague and uncertain. Have you any clue to the writing, or any means of knowing whence it comes?"

There was a small but nearly imperceptible red spot on the cheek of Signor Gradenigo, that did not escape the keen distrust of his companions; but he concealed his alarm, answering distinctly that he had none.

"We must then defer a decision for further

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proof. The justice of St. Mark hath been too much vaunted to endanger its reputation by a hasty decree, in a question which so closely touches the interest of a powerful noble of Italy. Don Camilla Monforte hath a name of distinction, and counteth too many of note among his kindred, to be dealt with as we might dispose of a gondolier, or the messenger of some foreign state."

"As respects him, signor, you are undoubtedly right. But may we not endanger our heiress by too much tenderness?"

"There are many convents in Venice, signor."

"The monastic life is ill-suited to the temper of my ward," the Signor Gradenigo dryly observed, "and I fear to hazard the experiment; gold is a key to unlock the strongest cell; besides, we cannot with due observance of propriety place a child of the state in durance."

"Signor Gradenigo, we have had this matter under long and grave consideration, and agreeably to our laws, when one of our number hath a palpable interest in the affair, we have taken counsel of his highness, who is of accord with us in sentiment. Your personal interest in the lady might have warped your usually excellent judgment; else, be assured we should have summoned you to the conference."

The old senator, who thus unexpectedly found himself excluded from consultation, on the very matter, that, of all others, made him most value his temporary authority, stood abashed and silent—reading in his countenance, however, a desire to know more, his associates proceeded to communicate all it was their intention he should hear.

"It hath been determined to remove the lady to a suitable retirement, and for this purpose care hath been already had to provide the means. Thou wilt be temporarily relieved of a most grievous charge which cannot but have worked heavily on thy spirits, and, in other particulars, have lessened thy much valued usefulness to the republic."

This unexpected communication was made with marked courtesy of manner; but with an emphasis and tone, that sufficiently acquainted the Signor Gradenigo with the nature of the suspicions that beset him. He had too long been familiar with the sinuous policy of the council, in which, at intervals, he had so often sat, not to understand that he would run the risk of a more serious accusation were he to hesitate in acknowledging its justice. Teaching his features, therefore, to wear a smile as treacherous as that of his wily companion, he answered with seeming gratitude—

"His highness and you my excellent colleagues, have taken council of your good wishes and kindness of heart, rather than of the duty of a poor subject of St. Mark, to toil on in his service while he hath strength and reason for the task," he said. "The management of a capricious female mind is a concern of no light moment, and while I thank you for this consideration of my case, you will permit me to express my readiness to resume the charge whenever it shall please the state again to confer it."

"Of this none are more persuaded than we, nor are any better satisfied of your ability to discharge the trust faithfully. But you enter, Signor, into all our motives, and will join us in the opinion, that it is equally unbecoming the republic, and one of its most illustrious citizens, to leave a ward of the former in a position that shall subject the latter to unmerited censure. Believe me, we have thought less of Venice in this matter than of the honor and the interests of the house of Gradenigo; for, should this Neapolitan thwart our views, you of us all would be most liable to be disapproved of."

"A thousand thanks, excellent sir," returned the deposed guardian. "You have taken a load from my mind, and restored some of the freshness and elasticity of youth! The claim of Don Camillo now is no longer urgent, since it is your pleasure to remove the lady, for a season, from the city."

"'Twere better to hold it in deeper suspense, if it were only to occupy his mind. Keep up thy communications, as of wont, and withhold not hope, which is a powerful exciter in minds that are not deadened by experience. We shall not conceal from one of our number, that a negotiation is already near a termination which will relieve the state from the care of the damsel, and at some benefit to the republic. Her estates lying without our limits greatly facilitate

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the treaty, which hath only been withheld from your knowledge, by the consideration, that of late we have rather too much overloaded thee with affairs."

Again the Signor Gradenigo bowed submissively, and with apparent joy. He saw that his secret design had been penetrated, notwithstanding all his practised duplicity and specious candor; and he submitted with that species of desperate resignation which becomes a habit, if not a virtue, in men long accustomed to be governed despotically. When this delicate subject, which required the utmost finesse of Venetian policy, since it involved the interests of one who happened at the moment, to be in the dreaded council itself, was disposed of, the Three turned their attention to other matters, with that semblance of indifference to personal feeling which practice in tortuous paths of state-intrigue enabled men to assume.

"Since we are so happily of opinion concerning the disposition of the Donna Violetta," coolly observed the oldest senator, a rare specimen of hackneyed, and worldly morality, "we may look into our list of daily duties—what saith the lion's mouths to-night?"

"A few of the ordinary and unmeaning accusations that spring from personal hatred," returned another. "One chargeth his neighbor with oversight in religious duties, and with some carelessness of the fasts of Holy Church—a foolish scandal, fitted for the ears of a curate."

"Is there naught else?"

"Another complaineth of neglect of a husband. The scrawl is in a woman's hand, and beareth, on its face, the evidence of a woman's resentment."

"Sudden to rise and easy to be appeased. Let the neighborhood quiet the household by its sneers—What next?"

"A suitor in the courts maketh complaint of the tardiness of the judges."

"This toucheth the reputation of St. Mark; it must be looked to!"

"Hold!" interrupted the Signor Gradenigo. "The tribunal acteth advisedly—'tis in the matter of a Hebrew, who is thought to have secrets of importance. The affair hath need of deliberation I do assure you."

"Destroy the charge—Have we more?"

"Nothing of note. The usual number of pleasantries and hobbling verses which tend to nothing. If we get some useful gleanings, by these secret accusations, we gain much nonsense. I would whip a youngster of ten who could not mould our soft Italian into better rhyme than this."

"'Tis the wantonness of security. Let it pass, for all that serveth to amuse suppresseth turbulent thoughts. Shall we now see his highness, Signori?"

"You forget the fisherman," gravely observed the Signor Gradenigo.

"Your honor sayeth true. What a head for business hath he! Nothing that is useful escapeth his ready mind."

The old senator, while he was too experienced to be cajoled by such language, saw the necessity of appearing flattered. Again he bowed, and protested aloud and frequently against the justice of compliments that he so little merited. When this little by-play was over, they proceeded gravely to consider the matter before them.

As the decision of the Council of Three will be made apparent in the course of the narrative, we shall not continue to detail the conversation that accompanied their deliberations. The sitting was long, so long indeed that when they arose, having completed their business, the heavy clock of the square tolled the hour of midnight.

"The Doge will be impatient," said one of the two nameless members, as they threw on their cloaks, before leaving the chamber. "I thought his highness wore a more fatigued and feeble air to-day, than he is wont to exhibit, at the festivities of the city."

"His highness is no longer young, signor. If I remember right, he greatly outnumbers either of us in years. Our Lady of Loretto lend him strength long to wear the ducal bonnet, and wisdom to wear it well!"

"He hath lately sent offerings to her shrine."

"Signor, he hath. His confessor hath gone in person with the offering, as I know of certainty. 'Tis not a serious gift, but a mere remembrance to keep himself in the odor of sanctity. I doubt that his reign will not be long!"

"There are, truly, signs of decay in his system. He is a worthy prince, and we shall

lose a father when called to weep for his loss!"

"Most true, Signor: but the horned bonnet is not an invulnerable shield against the arrows of death. Age and infirmities are more potent than our wishes."

"Thou art moody to-night, Signor Gradenigo. Thou art not used to be so silent with thy friends."

"I am not the less grateful, Signor, for their favors. If I have a loaded countenance, I bear a lightened heart. One who hath a daughter of his own so happily bestowed in wedlock as thine, may judge of the relief I feel by this disposition of my ward. Joy affects the exterior, frequently, like sorrow; ay, even to tears."

His two companions looked at the speaker with much obvious sympathy in their manners. They then left the chamber of doom together. The menials entered and extinguished the lights, leaving all behind them in an obscurity that was no bad type of the gloomy mysteries of the place.

CHAPTER XIV.

> Then methought,
> A serenade broke silence, breathing hope
> Through walls of stone.—*Italy.*

NOTWITHSTANDING the lateness of the hour, the melody of music was rife on the water. Gondolas continued to glide along the shadowed canals, while the laugh or the song was echoed among the arches of the palaces. The piazza and piazzetta were yet brilliant with lights, and gay with their multitudes of unwearied revellers.

The habitation of Donna Violetta was far from the scene of general amusement. Though so remote, the hum of the moving throng, and the higher strains of the wind-instruments, came, from time to time, to the ears of its inmates, mellowed and thrilling by distance.

The position of the moon cast the whole of the narrow passage which flowed beneath the windows of her private apartments into shadow. In a balcony which overhung the water stood the youthful and ardent girl, listening with a charmed ear and a tearful eye to one of those soft strains, in which Venetian voices answered to each other from different points on the canals, in the songs of the gondoliers. Her constant companion and mentor was near, while the ghostly father of them both stood deeper in the room.

"There may be pleasanter towns on the main, and capitals of more revelry," said the charmed Violetta, withdrawing her person from its leaning attitude, as the voices ceased; "but in such a night and at this witching hour, what city may compare with Venice?"

"Providence has been less partial in the distribution of its earthly favors than is apparent to a vulgar eye," returned the attentive Carmelite. "If we have our peculiar enjoyments and our moments of divine contemplation, other towns have advantages of their own; Genoa and Pisa, Firenze, Anoona, Roma, Palermo, and, chiefest of all, Napoli——"

"Napoli, father!"

"Daughter, Napoli. Of all the towns of sunny Italy, 'tis the fairest and the most blessed in natural gifts. Of every region I have visited, during a life of wandering and penitence, that is the country on which the touch of the Creator hath been the most God-like!"

"Thou art imaginative to-night, good Father Anselmo. The land must be fair indeed that can thus warm the fancy of a Carmelite."

"The rebuke is just. I have spoken more under the influence of recollections that came from days of idleness and levity, than with the chastened spirit of one who should see the hand of the Maker in the most simple and least lovely of all his wondrous works."

"You reproach yourself causelessly, holy father," observed the mild Donna Florinda, raising her eyes toward the pale countenance of the monk; "to admire the beauties of nature, is to worship him who gave them being."

At that moment a burst of music rose on the air proceeding from the water beneath the balcony. Donna Violetta started back abashed, and as she held her breath in wonder, and haply with that delight which open admiration is apt to excite in a youthful

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female bosom, the color mounted to her temples.

"There passeth a band," calmly observed the Donna Florinda.

"No, it is a cavalier! There are gondoliers, servitors in his colors."

"This is as hardy as it may be gallant," returned the monk, who listened to the air with an evident and grave displeasure.

There was no longer any doubt but that a serenade was meant. Though the custom was of much use, it was the first time that a similar honor had been paid beneath the window of Donna Violetta. The studied privacy of her life, her known destiny, and the jealousy of the despotic state, and perhaps the deep respect which encircled a maiden of her tender years and high condition, had, until that moment, kept the aspiring, the vain, and the interested equally in awe.

"It is for me!" whispered the trembling, the distressed, the delighted Violetta.

"It is for one of us, indeed," answered the cautious friend.

"Be it for whom it may, it is bold," rejoined the monk.

Donna Violetta shrunk from observation behind the drapery of the window, but she raised a hand in pleasure, as the rich strains rolled through the wide apartments.

"What a taste rules the band!" she half-whispered, afraid to trust her voice, lest a sound should escape her ears. "They touch an air of Petrarch's sonatas! How indiscreet, and yet how noble!"

"More noble than wise," said the Donna Florinda, who entered the balcony, and looked intently on the water beneath.

"Here are musicians in the color of a noble in one gondola," she continued, "and a single cavalier in another."

"Hath he no servitor? Doth he ply the oar himself?"

"Truly that decency hath not not been overlooked; one in a flowered jacket guides the boat."

"Speak, then, dearest Florinda, I pray thee."

"Would it be seemly?"

"Indeed, I think it. Speak them fair. Say that I am the senate's. That it is not discreet to urge a daughter of the state thus—say what thou wilt—but speak them fair."

"Ha! It is Don Camillo Monforte! I know him by his noble stature and the gallant wave of his hand."

"This temerity will undo him! His claim will be refused—himself banished. Is it not near the hour when the gondola of the police passes? Admonish him to depart, good Florinda—and yet—can we use this rudeness to a signor of his rank?"

"Father, counsel us; you know the hazards of this rash gallantry in the Neapolitan—aid us with thy wisdom, for there is not a moment to lose."

The Carmelite had been an attentive and an indulgent observer of the emotion, which sensations so novel had awakened in the ardent but unpractised breast of the fair Venetian. Pity, sorrow, and sympathy were painted on his mortified face, as he witnessed the mastery of feeling over a mind so guileless, and a heart so warm; but the look was rather that of one who knew the dangers of the passions than of one who condemned them, without thought of their origin or power. At the appeal of the governess he turned away and silently quitted the room. Donna Florinda left the balcony and drew near her charge. There was no explanation, nor any audible or visible means of making their sentiments known to each other. Violetta threw herself into the arms of her more experienced friend, and struggled to conceal her face in her bosom. At this moment the music suddenly ceased, and the plash of oars falling into the water succeeded.

"He is gone!" exclaimed the young creature, who had been the object of the serenade, and whose faculties, spite of her confusion, had lost none of their acuteness. "The gondolas are moving away, and we have not made even the customary acknowledgements for their civility!"

"It is not needed—or rather it might increase a hazard that is already too weighty. Remember thy high destiny, my child, and let them depart."

"And yet, methinks, one of my station should not fail in courtesy. The compliment may mean no more than any other idle usage, and they should not quit us unthanked."

"Rest you, within. I will watch the

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movement of the boats, for it surpasseth female endurance not to note their aspect."

"Thanks, dearest Florinda! hasten, lest they enter the other canal ere thou seest them."

The governess was quickly in the balcony. Active as was her movement, her eyes were scarcely cast upon the shadow beneath, before a hurried question demanded what she beheld.

"Both gondolas are gone," was the answer. "That with the musicians is already entering the great canal, but that of the cavalier hath unaccountably disappeared!"

"Nay, look again; he cannot be in such haste to quit us."

"I had not sought him in the right direction. Here is his gondola by the bridge of our own canal."

"And the cavalier? He waits for some sign of courtesy; it is meet that we should not withhold it."

"I see him not. His servitor is seated on the steps of the landing, while the gondola appeareth to be empty. The man hath an air of waiting, but I nowhere see the master."

"Blessed Maria! can aught have befallen the gallant Duca di Sant' Agata?"

"Naught but the happiness of casting himself here!" exclaimed a voice near the person of the heiress. The Donna Violetta turned her gaze from the balcony, and beheld him who filled all her thoughts at her feet.

The cry of the girl, the exclamation of her friend, and a rapid and eager movement of the monk, brought the whole party into a group.

"This may not be," said the latter in a reproving voice. "Arise, Don Camillo, lest I repent listening to your prayer; you exceed our conditions."

"As much as this emotion exceedeth my hopes," answered the noble. "Holy father, it is vain to oppose Providence! Providence brought me to the rescue of this lovely being, when accident threw her into the Giudecca, and, once more, Providence is my friend, by permitting me to be a witness of this feeling. Speak, fair Violetta, thou wilt not be an instrument of the senate's selfishness—thou wilt not hearken to their wish of disposing of thy hand on the mercenary, who would trifle with the most sacred of all vows, to possess thy wealth?"

"For whom am I destined?" demanded Violetta.

"No matter, since it be not for me. Some trafficker in happiness, some worthless abuser of the gifts of fortune."

"Thou knowest, Camilla, our Venetian custom, and must see that I am hopelessly in their hands."

"Arise, Duca di Sant' Agata," said the monk with authority; "when I suffered you you to enter this palace, it was to remove a scandal from its gates, and to save you from your own rash disregard of the state's displeasure. It is idle to encourage hopes that the policy of the republic opposes. Arise, then, and respect your pledges."

"That shall be as this lady may decide. Encourage me with but an approving look, fairest Violetta, and not Venice, with its Doge and inquisition, shall stir me an inch from thy feet!"

"Camillo!" answered the trembling girl, "thou, the preserver of my life, hast little need to kneel to me!"

"Duke of St. Agata—daughter!"

"Nay, heed him not, generous Violetta. He utters words of convention—he speaks as all speak in age, when men's tongues deny the feelings of their youth. He is a Carmelite, and must feign this prudence. He never knew the tyranny of the passions. The dampness of his cell has chilled the ardor of the heart. Had he been human, he would have loved; had he loved, he would never have worn a cowl."

Father Anselmo receded a pace, like one pricked in conscience, and the paleness of his ascetic features took a deadly hue. His lips moved as if he would have spoken, but the sounds were smothered by an oppression that denied him utterance. The gentle Florinda saw his distress, and she endeavored to interpose between the impetuous youth and her charge.

"It may be as you say, Signor Monforte," she said, "and that the senate, in its fatherly care, searches a partner worthy of an heiress of a house so illustrious and so endowed as that of Tiepolo. But in this, what is there more than of wont? Do not the nobles of all Italy seek their equals in condition and in the

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gifts of fortune, in order that their union may be fittingly assorted? How know we that the estates of my young friend have not a value in the eyes of the Duke of St. Agata, as well as in those of him that the senate may elect for her husband?"

"Can this be true?" exclaimed Violetta.

"Believe it not; my errand in Venice is no secret. I seek the restitution of lands and houses long withheld from my family, with the honors of the senate that are justly mine. All these do I joyfully abandon for the hope of thy favor."

"Thou hearest, Florinda: Don Camillo is not to be distrusted!"

"What are the senate and the power of St. Mark, that they should cross our lives with misery? Be mine, lovely Violetta, and in the fastnesses of my own good Calabrian castle, we will defy their vengeance and policy. Their disappointment shall furnish merriment for my vassals, and our felicity shall make the happiness of thousands. I affect no disrespect for the dignity of the councils, nor any indifference to that I lose, but to me art though far more precious than the horned bonnet itself, with all its fancied influence and glory."

"Generous Camillo!"

"Be mine, and spare the cold calculators of the senate another crime. They think to dispose of thee, as if thou wert worthless merchandise, to their own advantage. But thou wilt defeat their design. I read the generous resolution in thine eye, Violetta; thou wilt manifest a will superior to their arts and egotism."

"I would not be trafficked for, Don Camillo Monforte, but wooed and won as befitteth a maiden of my condition. They may still leave me liberty of choice. The Signor Gradenigo hath much encouraged me of late with this hope, when speaking of the establishment suited to my years."

"Believe him not; a colder heart, a spirit more removed from charity, exists not in Venice. He courts thy favor for his own prodigal son; a cavalier without honor, the companion of profligates, and the victim of the Hebrews. Believe him not, for he is stricken in deceit."

"He is the victim of his own designs, if this be true. Of all the youths of Venice I esteem Giacomo Gradenigo least."

"This interview must have an end," said the monk, interposing effectually, and compelling the lover to rise. "It would be easier to escape the toils of sin than to elude the agents of the police. I tremble lest this visit should be known, for we are encircled with the ministers of the state, and not a palace in Venice is more narrowly watched than this. Were thy presence here detected, indiscreet young man, thy youth might pine in a prison, while thou would'st be the cause of persecution and unmerited sorrow to this innocent and inexperienced maiden."

"A prison, sayest thou, father?"

"No less, daughter. Lighter offences are often expiated by heavier judgments, when the pleasure of the senate is thwarted."

"Thou must not be condemned to a prison, Camillo!"

"Fear it not. The years and peaceful calling of the father make him timid. I have long been prepared for this happy moment, and I ask but a single hour to put Venice and all her toils at defiance. Give me the blessed assurance of thy truth, and confide in my means for the rest."

"Thou hearest, Florinda!"

"This bearing is suited to the sex of Don Camillo, dearest, but it ill becometh thee. A maiden of high quality must await the decision of her natural guardians."

"But should that choice be Giacomo Gradenigo?"

"The senate will not hear of it. The arts of his father have long been known to thee; and thou must have seen, by the secrecy of his own advances, that he distrusts their decision. The state will have a care to dispose of thee as befitteth thy hopes. Thou art sought of many, and those who guard thy fortune only await the proposals which best become thy birth."

"Proposals that become my birth!"

"Suitable in years, condition, expectations, and character."

"Am I to regard Don Camillo Monforte as one beneath me?"

The monk again interposed.

"This interview must end," he said. "The eyes drawn upon us, by your indiscreet music.

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are now turned on other objects, signor, and you must break your faith, or depart."

"Alone, father?"

"Is the Donna Violetta to quit the roof of her father with as little warning as an unfavored dependent?"

"Nay, Signor Monforte, you could not, in reason, have expected more, in this interview, than the hope of some future termination to your suit—some pledge——"

"And that pledge?"

The eyes of Violetta turned from her governess to her lover, from her lover to the monk, and from the latter to the floor.

"Is thine, Camillo."

A common cry escaped the Carmelite and the governess.

"Thy mercy, excellent friend," continued the blushing but decided Violetta. "If I have encouraged Don Camillo, in a manner that thy counsels and maiden modesty would reprove; reflect that had he hesitated to cast himself into the Giudecca, I should have wanted the power to confer this trifling grace. Why should I be less generous than my preserver? No, Camillo, when the senate condemns me to wed another than thee, it pronounces the doom of celibacy; I will hide my griefs in a convent till I die!"

There was a solemn and fearful interruption to a discourse which was so rapidly becoming explicit, by the sound of the bell, that the groom of the chambers, a long-tried and confidential domestic, had been commanded to ring before he entered. As this injunction had been accompanied by another not to appear, unless summoned, or urged by some grave motive, the signal caused a sudden pause, even at that interesting moment.

"How now!" exclaimed the Carmelite to the servant, who abruptly entered. "What means this disregard of my injunctions?"

"Father, the republic!"

"Is St. Mark in jeopardy, that females and priests are summoned to aid him?"

"There are officials of the state below, who demand admission in the name of the republic!"

"This grows serious," said Don Camillo, who alone retained his self-possession. "My visit is known, and the active jealousy of the state anticipates its object. Summon your resolution, Donna Violetta, and you, father, be of heart! I will assume the responsibility of the offence, if offence it be, and exonerate all others from censure."

"Forbid it, Father Anselmo. Dearest Florinda, we will share his punishment!" exclaimed the terrified Violetta, losing all self-command in the fear of such a moment. "He has not been guilty of this indiscretion without participation of mine; he has not presumed beyond his encouragement."

The monk and Donna Florinda regarded each other in mute amazement, and haply there was some admixture of feeling in the look that denoted the uselessness of caution when the passions were intent to elude the vigilance of those who were merely prompted by prudence. The former simply motioned for silence, while he turned to the domestic.

"Of what character are these ministers of the state?" he demanded.

"Father, they are its own officers, and wear the badges of their condition."

"And their request?"

"Is to be admitted to the presence of the Donna Violetta."

"There is still hope!" rejoined the monk, breathing more freely. Moving across the room, he opened a door which communicated with the private oratory of the palace. "Retire within this sacred chapel, Don Camillo, while we await the explanation of so extraordinary a visit."

As the time pressed, the suggestion was obeyed on the instant. The lover entered the oratory, and when the door was closed upon his person, the domestic, one known to be worthy of all confidence, was directed to usher in those who waited without.

But a single individual appeared. He was known, at a glance, for a public and responsible agent of the government, who was often charged with the execution of secret and delicate duties. Donna Violetta advanced to meet him, in respect to his employers, and with the return of that self-possession which long practice interweaves with the habits of the great.

"I am honored by this care of my dreaded and illustrious guardians," she said, making an acknowledgment for the low reverence with which the official saluted the richest

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ward of Venice. "To what circumstance do I owe this visit?"

The officer gazed an instant about him, with an habitual and suspicious caution, and then repeating his salutations, he answered.

"Lady," he said, "I am commanded to seek an interview with the daughter of the state, the heiress of the illustrious house of Tiepolo, with the Donna Florinda Mercato, her female companion, with the Father Anselmo, her commissioned confessor, and with any other who enjoys the pleasure of her society and the honor of her confidence."

"Those you seek are here; I am Violetta Tiepolo; to this lady I am indebted for a mother's care, and this reverend Carmelite is my spiritual counsellor. Shall I summon my household?"

"It is unnecessary. My errand is rather of private than of public concern. At the decease of your late most honored and much-lamented parent, the illustrious senator Tiepolo, the care of your person, lady, was committed by the republic, your natural and careful protector, to the especial guardianship and wisdom of Signor Alessandro Gradenigo, of illustrious and estimable qualities."

"Signor, you say true."

"Though the parental love of the councils may have seemed to be dormant, it has ever been wakeful and vigilant. Now that the years, instruction, beauty, and other excellencies of their daughter, have come to so rare perfection, they wish to draw the ties that unite them nearer, by assuming their own immediate duties about her person."

"By this I am to understand that I am no longer a ward of the Signor Gradenigo?"

"Lady, a ready wit has helped you to the explanation. That illustrious patrician is released from his cherished and well-acquitted duties. To-morrow new guardians will be charged with the care of your prized person, and will continue their honorable trust, until the wisdom of the senate shall have formed for you such an alliance, as shall not disparage a noble name and qualities that might adorn a throne."

"Am I to be separated from those I love?" demanded Violetta, impetuously.

"Trust to the senate's wisdom. I know not its determination concerning those who have long dwelt with you, but there can be no reason to doubt its tenderness or discretion. I have now only to add, that until those charged anew with the honorable office of your protectors shall arrive, it will be well to maintain the same modest reserve in the reception of visitors as of wont, and that your door, lady, must in propriety be closed against the Signor Gradenigo as against all others of his sex."

"Shall I not even thank him for his care?"

"He is tenfold rewarded in the senate's gratitude."

"It would have been gracious to have expressed my feelings toward the Signor Gradenigo in words; but that which is refused to the tongue will be permitted to the pen."

"The reserve that becomes the state of one so favored is absolute. St. Mark is jealous where he loves. And, now my commission is discharged, I humbly take my leave, flattered in having been selected to stand in such a presence, and to have been thought worthy of so honorable a duty."

As the officer ceased speaking and Violetta returned his bows, she turned her eyes, filled with apprehension, on the sorrowful features of her companions. The ambiguous language of those employed in such missions was too well known to leave much hope for the future. They all anticipated their separation on the morrow, though neither could penetrate the reason of this sudden change in the policy of the state. Interrogation was useless, for the blow evidently came from the secret council, whose motives could no more be fathomed than its decrees foreseen. The monk raised his hands in silent benediction toward his spiritual charge, and, unable, even in the presence of the stranger, to repress their grief, Donna Florinda and Violetta sunk into each other's arms and wept.

In the meantime the minister of this cruel blow had delayed his departure, like one who had a half-formed resolution. He regarded the countenance of the unconscious Carmelite intently, and in a manner that denoted the habit of thinking much before he decided.

"Reverend Father," he said, "may I crave a moment of your time, for an affair that concerns the soul of a sinner?

Though amazed, the monk could not hesitate about answering such an appeal. Obedient to a gesture of the officer, he followed

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him from the apartment, and continued at his side while the other threaded the magnificent rooms and descended to his gondola.

"You must be much honored of the senate, holy monk," observed the latter, while they proceeded, "to hold so near a trust about the person of one in whom the state takes so great an interest?"

"I feel it as such, my son. A life of peace and prayer should have made me friends."

"Men like you, Father, merit the esteem they crave. Are you long of Venice?"

"Since the last conclave. I came into the republic as confessor to the late minister from Florence."

"An honorable trust. You have been with us, then, long enough to know that the republic never forgets a servitor, nor forgives an affront."

"'Tis an ancient state, and one whose influence still reaches far and near."

"Have a care of the step. These marbles are treacherous to an uncertain foot."

"Mine is too practised in the descent to be unsteady. I hope I do not now descend these stairs for the last time?"

The minister of the council affected not to understand the question, but he answered as if replying only to the previous observation.

"'Tis truly a venerable state," he said, "but a little tottering with its years. All who love liberty, Father, must mourn to see so glorious a sway on the decline. *Sic transit gloria mundi!* You bare-footed Carmelites do well to mortify the flesh in youth, by which you escape the pains of a decreasing power. One like you can have few wrongs of his younger days to repair?"

"We are none of us without sin," returned the monk, crossing himself. "He who would flatter his soul with being perfect lays the additional weight of vanity on his life."

"Men of my occupation, holy Carmelite, have few opportunities of looking into themselves, and I bless the hour that hath brought me into company so godly. My gondola waits—will you enter?"

The monk regarded his companion in distrust, but knowing the uselessness of resistance, he murmured a short prayer and complied. A strong dash of the oars announced their departure from the steps of the palace.

CHAPTER XV.

O péscator! dell' onda,
Fi da lin;
O pescator! dell' onda,
Fi da lin:
Vien pescar in qua
Colla bella tua barca,
Colla bella se ne va,
Fi da lin, lin, la—*Venetian Boat Song.*

THE moon was at its height. Its rays fell in a flood on the swelling domes and massive roofs of Venice, while the margin of the town was brilliantly defined by the glittering bay. The natural and gorgeous setting was more than worthy of that picture of human magnificence; for at that moment, rich as was the queen of the Adriadic in her works of art, the grandeur of her public monuments, the number and splendor of her palaces, and most else that the ingenuity and ambition of man could attempt, she was but secondary in the glories of the hour.

Above was the firmament, gemmed with worlds, and sublime in immensity. Beneath lay the broad expanse of the Adriatic, endless to the eye, tranquil as the vault it reflected, and luminous with its borrowed light. Here and there a low island, reclaimed from the sea by the patient toil of a thousand years, dotted the Lagunes, burdened with the group of some dwellings, or picturesque with the modest roofs of a hamlet of the fishermen. Neither oar, nor song, nor laugh, nor flap of sail, nor jest of mariner, disturbed the stillness. All in the near view was clothed in midnight loveliness, and all in the distance bespoke the solemnity of nature at peace. The city and the Lagunes, the gulf and the dreamy Alps, the interminable plain of Lombardy, and the blue void of heaven, lay alike in a common and grand repose.

There suddenly appeared a gondola. It issued from among the watery channels of the town, and glided upon the vast bosom of the bay, noiseless as the fancied progress of a spirit. A practised and nervous arm guided its movement, which was unceasing and rapid. So swift indeed was the passage of the boat, as to denote pressing haste on the part of the solitary individual it contained. It held the direction of the Adriatic, steering between one of the more southern outlets of

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the bay and the well-known island of St. Giorgio. For half an hour the exertions of the gondolier were unrelaxed, though his eye was often cast behind him, as if he distrusted pursuit; and as often did he gaze ahead, betraying an anxious desire to reach some object that was yet invisible. When a wide reach of water lay between him and the town, however, he permitted his oar to rest, and he lent all his faculties to a keen and anxious search.

A small dark spot was discovered on the water still nearer to the sea. The oar of the gondolier dashed the element behind him, and his boat again glided away, so far altering its course as to show that all indecision was now ended. The darker spot was shortly beheld quivering in the rays of the moon, and it soon assumed the form and dimensions of a boat at anchor. Again the gondolier ceased his efforts, and he leaned forward, gazing intently at this undefined object, as if he would aid his powers of sight by the sympathy of his other faculties. Just then the notes of music came softly across the Lagunes. The voice was feeble even to trembling, but it had the sweetness of tone and the accuracy of execution which belong so peculiarly to Venice. It was the solitary man, in the distant boat, indulging in the song of a fisherman. The strains were sweet, and the intonations plaintive to melancholy. The air was common to all who applied the oar in the canals, and familiar to the ear of the listener. He waited until the close of a verse had died away, and then he answered with a strain of his own. The alternate parts were thus maintained until the music ceased, by the two singing a final verse in chorus.

When the song was ended, the oar of the gondolier stirred the water again, and he was quickly by the other's side.

"Thou art busy with thy hook betimes, Antonio," said he who had just arrived, as he stepped into the boat of the old fisherman already so well known to the reader. "There are men that an interview with the Council of Three would have sent to their prayers and a sleepless bed."

"There is not a chapel in Venice, Jacopo, in which a sinner may so well lay bare his soul as in this. I have been here on the empty Lagunes, alone with God, having the gates of Paradise open before my eyes."

"One like thee hath no need of images to quicken his devotion."

"I see the image of my Saviour, Jacopo, in those bright stars, that moon, the blue heavens, the misty bank of mountain, the waters on which we float, ay, even in my own sinking form, as in all which has come from His wisdom and power. I have prayed much since the moon has risen."

"And is habit so strong in thee, that thou thinkest of God and thy sins, while thou anglest?"

"The poor must toil and the sinful must pray. My thoughts have dwelt so much of late on the boy that I have forgotten to provide myself with food. If I fish later or earlier than common, 'tis because a man cannot live on grief."

"I have bethought me of thy situation, honest Antonio; here is that which will support life and raise thy courage. See," added the Bravo, stretching forth an arm into his own gondola, from which he drew a basket, "here is bread from Dalmatia, wine of Lower Italy, and figs from the Levant—eat, then, and be of good cheer."

The fisherman threw a wistful glance at the viands, for hunger was making powerful appeals to the weakness of nature, but his hand did not relinquish its hold of the line, with which he still continued to angle.

"And these are thy gifts, Jacopo?" he asked in a voice that, spite of his resignation, betrayed the longings of appetite.

"Antonio, they are the offerings of one who respects thy courage and honors thy nature."

"Bought with his earnings?"

"Can it be otherwise?—I am no beggar, for the love of the saints, and few in Venice give unasked. Eat, then, without fear; seldom wilt thou be more welcome."

"Take them away, Jacopo, if thou lovest me. Do not tempt them beyond what I can bear."

"How! art thou commanded to a penance?" hastily exclaimed the other.

"Not so—not so. It is long since I have found leisure or heart for the confessional."

"Then why refuse the gift of a friend? Remember thy years and necessities."

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"I cannot feed on the price of blood!"

The hand of the Bravo was withdrawn as if repelled by an electric touch. The action caused the rays of the moon to fall athwart his kindling eye, and firm as Antonio was in honesty and principle, he felt the blood creep to his heart as he encountered the fierce and sudden glance of his companion. A long pause succeeded, during which the fisherman diligently plied his line, though utterly regardless of the object for which it had been cast.

"I have said it, Jacopo," he added, at length, "and tongue of mine shall not belie the thought of my heart. Take away thy food then, and forget all that is past; for what I have said hath not been said in scorn, but out of regard to my own soul. Thou knowest how I have sorrowed for the boy, but next to his loss I could mourn over thee—ay, more bitterly than over any other of the fallen!"

The hard breathing of the Bravo was audible, but still he spoke not.

"Jacopo," continued the anxious fisherman, "do not mistake me. The pity of the suffering and poor is not like the scorn of the rich and worldly. If I touch a sore, I do not bruise it with my heel. Thy present pain is better than the greatest of all thy former joys."

"Enough, old man," said the other in a smothered voice; "thy words are forgotten. Eat without fear, for the offering is bought with earnings as pure as the gleamings of a mendicant friar."

"I will trust to the kindness of St. Anthony and the fortune of my hook," simply, returned Antonio. "'Tis common for us of the Lagunes to go to a supperless bed; take away the basket, good Jacopo, and let us speak of other things."

The Bravo ceased to press his food upon the fisherman. Laying aside his basket, he sat brooding over what had occurred.

"Hast thou come thus far for naught else, good Jacopo?" demanded the old man, willing to weaken the shock of his refusal.

The question appeared to restore Jacopo to a recollection of his errand. He stood erect, and looked about him for more than a minute, with a keen eye and an entire intentness of purpose. The look in the direction of the city was longer and more earnest than those thrown toward the sea and the main, nor was it withdrawn until an involuntary start betrayed equally surprise and alarm.

"Is there not a boat here, in a line with the tower of the campanile?" he asked quickly, pointing towards the city.

"It so seems. It is early for my comrades to be abroad, but the draughts have not been heavy of late, and the revelry of yesterday drew many of our people from their toil. The patricians must eat, and the poor must labor, or both would die."

The Bravo slowly seated himself, and he looked with concern into the countenance of his companion.

"Art thou long here, Antonio?"

"But an hour. When they turned us away from the palace, thou knowest that I told thee of my necessities. There is not, in common, a more certain spot on the Lagunes than this, and yet have I long played the line in vain. The trial of hunger is hard, but like all other trials it must be borne. I have prayed to my patron thrice, and sooner or later he will listen to my wants. Thou art used to the manners of these masked nobles, Jacopo; dost thou think them likely to hearken to reason? I hope I did the cause no wrong for want of breeding, but I spoke them fair and plainly as fathers and men with hearts."

"As senators they have none. Thou little understandest, Antonio, the distinctions of these patricians. In the gayety of their palaces, and among the companions of their pleasures, none will speak you fairer of humanity and justice—ay, even of God! but when met to discuss what they call the interests of St. Mark, there is not a rock on the coldest peak of yonder Alp, with less humanity, or a wolf among their valleys more heartless!"

"Thy words are strong, Jacopo—I would not do injustice even to those who have done me this wrong. The senators are men, and God has given all feelings and nature alike."

"The gift is then abused. Thou hast felt the want of thy daily assistant, fisherman, and thou hast sorrowed for thy child; for thee it is easy to enter into another's griefs; but the senators know nothing of suffering.

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Their children are not dragged to the galleys, their hopes are never destroyed by laws coming from hard task-masters, nor are their tears shed for sons ruined by being made companions of the dregs of the republic. They will talk of public virtue and services to the state, but in their own cases they mean the virtue of renown, and services that bring with them honors and rewards. The wants of the state are their conscience, though they take heed those wants shall do themselves no harm."

"Jacopo, Providence itself hath made a difference in men. One is large, another small; one weak, another strong; one wise, another foolish. At what Providence hath done, we should not murmur."

"Providence did not make the senate; 'tis an invention of man. Mark me, Antonio, thy language hath given offence, and thou art not safe in Venice. They will pardon all but complaint against their justice. That is too true to be forgiven."

"Can they wish to harm one who seeks his own child?"

"If thou wert great and respected, they would undermine thy fortune and character, ere thou should'st put their system in danger—as thou art weak and poor, they will do thee some direct injury, unless thou art moderate. Before all, I warn thee that their system must stand!"

"Will God suffer this?"

"We may not enter into His secrets," returned the Bravo, devoutly crossing himself. "Did His reign end with this world, there might be injustice in suffering the wicked to triumph, but, as it is, we—— Yon boat approaches fast! I little like its air and movements."

"They are not fishermen, truly, for there are many oars and a canopy!"

"It is a gondola of the state!" exclaimed Jacopo, rising and stepping into his own boat, which he cast loose from that of his companion, when he stood in evident doubt as to his future proceedings. "Antonio, we should do well to row away."

"Thy fears are natural," said the unmoved fisherman, "and 'tis a thousand pities that there is cause for them. There is yet time for one skilful as thou to outstrip the fleetest gondola on the canals."

"Quick, lift thy anchor, old man, and depart,—my eye is sure. I know the boat."

"Poor Jacopo! what a curse is a tender conscience! Thou hast been kind to me in my need, and if prayers, from a sincere heart, can do thee service, thou shalt not want them."

"Antonio!" cried the other, causing his boat to whirl away, and then pausing an instant like a man undecided—"I can stay no longer—trust them not—they are false as fiends—there is no time to lose—I must away."

The fisherman murmured an ejaculation of pity as he waved a hand in adieu.

"Holy St. Anthony, watch over my own child, lest he come to some such miserable life!" he added in an audible prayer—"There hath been good seed cast on a rock, in that youth, for a warmer or kinder heart is not in man. That one like Jacopo should live by striking the assassin's blow!"

The near approach of the strange gondola now attracted the whole attention of the old man. It came swiftly towards him, impelled by six strong oars, and his eye turned feverishly in the direction of the fugitive. Jacopo, with a readiness that necessity and long practice rendered nearly instinctive, had taken a direction which blended his wake in a line with one of those bright streaks that the moon drew on the water, and which, by dazzling the eye, effectually concealed the objects within its width. When the fisherman saw that the Bravo had disappeared, he smiled and seemed at ease.

"Ay, let them come here," he said; "it will give Jacopo more time. I doubt not the poor fellow hath struck a blow, since quitting the palace, that the council will not forgive! The sight of gold hath been too strong, and he hath offended those who have so long borne with him. God forgive me, that I have had communion with such a man! but when the heart is heavy, the pity of even a dog will warm our feelings. Few care for me, now, or the friendship of such as he could never have been welcome."

Antonio ceased, for the gondola of the state came with a rushing noise to the side of his own boat, where it was suddenly stopped by a backward sweep of the oars. The water was still in ebullition, when a form

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passing into the gondola of the fisherman, the larger boat shot away again, to the distance of a few hundred feet, and remained at rest.

Antonio witnessed this movement in silent curiosity; but when he saw the gondoliers of the state lying on their oars, he glanced his eye again furtively in the direction of Jacopo, saw that all was safe, and faced his companion with confidence. The brightness of the moon enabled him to distinguish the dress and aspect of a bare-footed Carmelite. The latter seemed more confounded than his companion, by the rapidity of the movement, and the novelty of his situation. Notwithstanding his confusion, however, an evident look of wonder crossed his mortified features, when he first beheld the humble condition, the thin and whitened locks, and the general air and bearing of the old man with whom he now found himself.

"Who art thou?" escaped him, in the impulse of surprise.

"Antonio of the Lagunes! A fisherman that owes much to St. Anthony, for favors little deserved."

"And why hath one like thee fallen beneath the senate's displeasure?"

"I am honest and ready to do justice to others. If that offend the great, they are men more to be pitied than envied."

"The convicted are always more disposed to believe themselves unfortunate than guilty. The error is fatal, and it should be eradicated from the mind, lest it lead to death."

"Go tell this to the patricians. They have need of plain counsel, and a warning from the Church."

"My son, there is pride and anger, and a perverse heart, in thy replies. The sins of the senators—and as they are men, they are not without spot—can in no manner whiten thine own. Though an unjust sentence should condemn one to punishment, it leaves the offences against God in their native deformity. Men may pity him who hath wrongfully undergone the anger of the world, but the Church will only pronounce pardon on him who confesseth his errors, with a sincere admission of their magnitude."

"Have you come, father, to shrive a penitent?"

"Such is my errand. I lament the occasion, and if what I fear be true, still more must I regret that one so aged should have brought his devoted head beneath the arm of justice."

Antonio smiled, and again he bent his eyes along that dazzling streak of light, which had swallowed up the gondola and the person of the Bravo.

"Father," he said, when a long and earnest look was ended, "there can be little harm in speaking truth to one of thy holy office. They have told thee there was a criminal here in the Lagunes, who hath provoked the anger of St. Mark?"

"Thou art right."

"It is not easy to know when St. Mark is pleased, or when he is not," continued Antonio, plying his line with indifference, "for the very man he now seeks has he long tolerated; ay, even in presence of the Doge. The senate hath its reasons which lie beyond the reach of the ignorant, but it would have been better for the soul of the poor youth, and more seemly for the republic, had it turned a discouraging countenance on his deeds from the first."

"Thou speakest of another!—thou art not then the criminal they seek?"

"I am a sinner, like all born of woman, reverend Carmelite, but my hand hath never held any other weapon than the good sword with which I struck the infidel. There was one lately here, that, I grieve to add, cannot say this!"

"And he is gone?"

"Father, you have your eyes, and you can answer that question for yourself. He is gone; though he is not far; still is he beyond the reach of the swiftest gondola in Venice, praised by St. Mark!"

The Carmelite bowed his head, where he was seated, and his lips moved, either in prayer or in thanksgiving.

"Are you sorry, monk, that a sinner has escaped?"

"Son, I rejoice that this bitter office hath passed from me, while I mourn that there should be a spirit so depraved as to require it. Let us summon the servants of the republic, and inform them that their errand is useless."

"Be not of haste, good father. The night

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is gentle, and these hirelings sleep on their oars, like gulls in the Lagunes. The youth will have more time for repentance, should he be undisturbed."

The Carmelite, who had arisen, instantly reseated himself, like one actuated by a strong impulse.

"I thought he had already been far beyond pursuit," he muttered, unconsciously apologizing for his apparent haste.

"He is over-bold, and I fear he will row back to the canals, in which case you might meet nearer to the city—or, there may be more gondolas of the state out—in short, father, thou wilt be more certain to escape hearing the confession of a Bravo, by listening to that of a fisherman, who has long wanted an occasion to acknowledge his sins."

Men who ardently wish the same result, require few words to understand each other. The Carmelite took, intuitively, the meaning of his companion, and throwing back his cowl, a movement that exposed the countenance of Father Anselmo, he prepared to listen to the confession of the old man.

"Thou art a Christian, and one of thy years hath not to learn the state of mind that becometh a penitent;" said the monk, when each was ready.

"I am a sinner, father; give me counsel and absolution, that I may have hope."

"Thy will be done—thy prayer is heard—approach and kneel."

Antonio, who had fastened his line to his seat, and disposed of his net with habitual care, now crossed himself devoutly, and took his station before the Carmelite. His acknowledgments of error then began. Much mental misery clothed the language and ideas of the fisherman with a dignity that his auditor had not been accustomed to find in men of his class. A spirit so long chastened by suffering had become elevated and noble. He related his hopes for the boy, the manner in which they had been blasted by the unjust and selfish policy of the state, his different efforts to procure the release of his grandson, and his bold expedients at the regatta, and the fancied nuptials with the Adriatic. When he had thus prepared the Carmelite to understand the origin of his sinful passions, which it was now his duty to expose, he spoke of those passions themselves, and of their influence on a mind that was ordinarily at peace with mankind. The tale was told simply and without reserve, but in a manner to inspire respect, and to awaken powerful sympathy in him who heard it.

"And these feelings thou didst indulge against the honored and powerful of Venice?" demanded the monk, affecting a severity he could not feel.

"Before my God do I confess the sin! In bitterness of heart I cursed them; for to me they seemed men without feeling for the poor, and heartless as the marbles of their own palaces."

"Thou knowest that to be forgiven, thou must forgive. Dost thou, at peace with all of earth, forget this wrong, and canst thou, in charity with thy fellows, pray to Him who died for the race, in behalf of those who have injured thee?"

Antonio bowed his head on his naked breast, and he seemed to commune with his soul.

"Father," he said, in a rebuked tone, "I hope I do."

"Thou must not trifle with thyself to thine own perdition. There is an eye in yon vault above us which pervades space, and which looks into the inmost secrets of the heart. Canst thou pardon the error of the patricians, in a contrite spirit for thine own sins?"

"Holy Maria, pray for them, as I now ask mercy in their behalf!—Father, they are forgiven."

"Amen!"

The Carmelite arose and stood over the kneeling Antonio, with the whole of his benevolent countenance illuminated by the moon. Stretching his arms towards the stars, he pronounced the absolution, in a voice that was touched with pious fervor. The upward expectant eye, with the withered lineaments of the fisherman, and the holy calm of the monk, formed a picture of resignation and hope that angels would have loved to witness.

"Amen! amen!" exclaimed Antonio, as he arose, crossing himself; "St. Anthony and the Virgin aid me to keep these resolutions!"

"I will not forget thee, my son, in the offices of holy church. Receive my benediction, that I may depart."

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Antonio again bowed his knee, while the Carmelite firmly pronounced the words of peace. When this last office was performed, and a decent interval of mutual but silent prayer had passed, a signal was given to summon the gondola of the state. It came rowing down with great force, and was instantly at their side. Two men passed into the boat of Antonio, and with officious zeal assisted the monk to resume his place in that of the republic.

"Is the penitent shrived?" half whispered one, seemingly the superior of the two.

"Here is an error. He thou seekest has escaped. This aged man is a fisherman named Antonio, and one who cannot have gravely offended St. Mark. The Bravo hath passed towards the island of San Giorgio, and must be sought elsewhere."

The officer released the person of the monk, who passed quickly beneath the canopy, and he turned to cast a hasty glance at the features of the fisherman. The rubbing of a rope was audible, and the anchor of Antonio was lifted by a sudden jerk. A heavy plashing of the water followed, and the two boats shot away together, obedient to a violent effort of the crew. The gondola of the state exhibited its usual number of gondoliers bending to their toil, with its dark and hearse-like canopy, but that of the fisherman was empty!

The sweep of the oars and the plunge of the body of Antonio had been blended in a common wash of the surge. When the fisherman came to the surface, after his fall, he was alone in the centre of the vast but tranquil sheet of water. There might have been a glimmering of hope, as he arose from the darkness of the sea to the bright beauty of that moon-lit night. But the sleeping domes were too far for human strength, and the gondolas were sweeping madly towards the town. He turned, and swimming feebly, for hunger and previous exertion had undermined his strength, he bent his eyes on the dark spot, which he had constantly recognized as the boat of the Bravo.

Jacopo had not ceased to watch the interview, with the utmost intentness of his faculties. Favored by position, he could see without being distinctly visible. He saw the Carmelite pronouncing the absolution, and he witnessed the approach of the larger boat. He heard a plunge heavier than that of falling oars, and he saw the gondola of Antonio towing away empty. The crew of the republic had scarcely swept the Lagunes with their oar-blades, before his own stirred the water.

"Jacopo!—Jacopo!" came fearfully and faintly to his ears.

The voice was known and the occasion thoroughly understood. The cry of distress was succeeded by the rush of the water, as it piled before the beak of the Bravo's gondola. The sound of the parted element was like the sighing of a breeze. Ripples and bubbles were left behind, as the driven scud floats past the stars and all those muscles which had once before that day been so finely developed in the race of the gondoliers, were now expanded, seemingly in twofold volume. Energy and skill were in every stroke, and the dark spot came down the streak of light, like the swallow touching the water with its wing.

"Hither, Jacopo—thou steerest wide!"

The beak of the gondola turned, and the glaring eye of the Bravo caught a glimpse of the fisherman's head.

"Quickly, good Jacopo,—I fail!"

The murmuring of the water again drowned the stifled words. The efforts of the oar were frenzied, and at each stroke the light gondola appeared to rise from its element.

"Jacopo—hither—dear Jacopo!"

"The mother of God aid thee, fisherman!—I come."

"Jacopo—the boy!—the boy!"

The water gurgled; an arm was visible in the air, and it disappeared. The gondola drove upon the spot where the limb had just been visible, and a backward stroke, that caused the ashen blade to bend like a reed, laid the trembling boat motionless. The furious action threw the Lagune into ebullition, but, when the foam subsided, it lay calm as the blue and peaceful vault it reflected.

"Antonio!"—burst from the lips of the Bravo.

A frightful silence succeeded the call. There was neither answer nor human form. Jacopo compressed the handle of his oar with fingers of iron, and his own breathing caused him to start. On every side he bent a frenzied eye, and on every side he beheld the profound

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repose of that treacherous element which is so terrible in its wrath. Like the human heart, it seemed to sympathize with the tranquil beauty of the midnight view; but, like the human heart, it kept its own fearful secrets.

CHAPTER XVI.

Yet a few days and dream-perturbed nights,
And I shall slumber well—but where?—no matter.
Adieu, my Angiolina.—*Marino Faliero.*

When the Carmelite re-entered the apartment of Donna Violetta, his face was covered with the hue of death, and his limbs with difficulty supported him to a chair. He scarcely observed that Don Camillo Monforte was still present, nor did he note the brightness and joy which glowed in the eyes of the ardent Violetta. Indeed his appearance was at first unseen by the happy lovers, for the lord of St. Agata had succeeded in wresting the secret from the breast of his mistress, if that may be called a secret which Italian character had scarcely struggled to retain, and he had crossed the room before even the more tranquil look of the Donna Florinda rested on his person.

"Thou art ill!" exclaimed the governess. "Father Anselmo hath not been absent without grave cause!"

The monk threw back his cowl for air, and the act discovered the deadly paleness of his features. But his eyes, charged with a meaning of horror, rolled over the faces of those who drew around him, as if he struggled with memory to recall their persons.

"Ferdinando! Father Anselmo!" cried the Donna Florinda, correcting the unbidden familiarity, though she could not command the anxiety of her rebel features; "speak to us—thou art suffering!"

"Ill at heart, Florinda."

"Deceive us not—haply thou hast more evil tidings—Venice——"

"Is a fearful state!"

"Why hast thou quitted us?—why, in a moment of so much importance to our pupil—a moment that may prove of the last influence on her happiness—hast thou been absent for a long hour?"

Violetta turned a surprised and unconscious glance towards the clock, but she spoke not.

"The servants of the state had need of me," returned the monk, easing the pain of his spirit by a groan.

"I understand thee, father;—thou hast shrived a penitent?"

"Daughter, I have; and fewer depart more at peace with God and their fellows!"

Donna Florinda murmured a short prayer for the soul of the dead, piously crossing herself as she concluded. Her example was imitated by her pupil, and even the lips of Don Camillo moved, while his head was bowed by the side of his fair companion, in seeming reverence.

"'Twas a just end, father?" demanded Donna Florinda.

"It was an unmerited one!" cried the monk, with fervor, "or there is no faith in man. I have witnessed the death of one who was better fitted to live, as happily he was better fitted to die, than those who pronounced his doom. What a fearful state is Venice!"

"And such are they who are masters of thy person, Violetta," said Don Camillo; "to these midnight murderers will thy happiness be consigned! Tell us, father, does thy sad tragedy touch in any manner on the interests of this fair being? for we are encircled here by mysteries that are as incomprehensible, while they are nearly as fearful, as fate itself."

The monk looked from one to the other, and a more human expression began to appear in his countenance.

"Thou art right," he said; "such are the men who mean to dispose of the person of our pupil. Holy St. Mark pardon the prostitution of his revered name, and shield her with the virtue of his prayers!"

"Father, are we worthy to know more of that thou hast witnessed?"

"The secrets of the confessional are sacred, my son; but this hath been a disclosure to cover the living, and not the dead, with shame."

"I see the hand of those up above in this!" for so most spoke of the Council of Three. "They have tampered with my right, for years, to suit their selfish purposes, and, to my shame must I own it, they have driven

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me to a submission, in order to obtain justice, that as ill accords with my feelings as with my character."

"Nay, Camillo, thou art incapable of this injustice to thyself!"

"'Tis a fearful government, dearest, and its fruits are equally pernicious to the ruler and the subject. It hath, of all other dangers the greatest, the curse of secrecy on its intentions, its acts, and its responsibilities!"

"Thou sayest true, my son; there is no security against oppression and wrong in a state, but the fear of God, or the fear of men. Of the first, Venice hath none, for too many souls share the odium of her sin; and as for the last, her deeds are hid from their knowledge."

"We speak boldly, for those who live beneath her laws," observed Donna Florinda, glancing a look timidly around her. "As we can neither change nor amend the practices of the state, better that we should be silent."

"If we cannot alter the power of the council, we may elude it," hastily answered Don Camillo, though he, too, dropped his voice, and assured himself of their security, by closing the casement, and casting his eyes toward the different doors of the room. "Are you assured of the fidelity of the menials, Donna Florinda?"

"Far from it, signor; we have those who are of ancient service and of tried character; but we have those who are named by the senator, Gradenigo, and who are doubtless no other than the agents of the state."

"In this manner do they pry into the privacy of all! I am compelled to entertain, in my palace varlets that I know to be their hirelings; and yet do I find it better to seem unconscious of their views, lest they environ me in a manner that I cannot even suspect. Think you, Father, that my presence here hath escaped the spies?"

"It would be to hazard much were we to rely on such security. None saw us enter, as I think, for we used the secret gate and the more private entrance; but who is certain of being unobserved when every fifth eye is that of a mercenary?"

The terrified Violetta laid her hand on the arm of her lover.

"Even now, Camillo," she said, "thou mayest be observed, and secretly devoted to punishment!"

"If seen, doubt it not: St. Mark will never pardon so bold an interference with his pleasure. And yet, sweetest Violetta, to gain thy favor, this risk is nothing; nor will a far greater hazard turn me from my purpose."

"These inexperienced and confiding spirits have taken advantage of my absence to communicate more freely than was discreet," said the Carmelite, in the manner of one who foresaw the answer.

"Father, nature is too strong for the weak preventives of prudence."

The brow of the monk became clouded. His companions watched the workings of his mind, as they appeared in a countenance that in common was so benevolent, though always sad. For a few moments none broke the silence.

The Carmelite at length demanded, raising his troubled look to the countenance of Don Camillo—

"Hast thou duly reflected on the consequences of this rashness, son? What dost thou purpose, in thus braving the anger of the republic, and in setting at defiance her arts, her secret means of intelligence, and her terrors?"

"Father, I have reflected as all of my years reflect, when in heart and soul they love. I have brought myself to feel that any misery would be happiness compared to the loss of Violetta, and that no risk can exceed the reward of gaining her favor. Thus much for the first of thy questions—for the last I can only say that I am too much accustomed to the wiles of the senate to be a novice in the means of counteracting them."

"There is but one language for youth, when seduced by that pleasing delusion which paints the future with hues of gold. Age and experience may condemn it, but the weakness will continue to prevail in all, until life shall appear in its true colors. Duca di Sant' Agata, though a noble of high lineage and illustrious name, and though lord of many vassals, thou art not a power—thou canst not declare thy palace in Venice a fortress, nor send a herald to the Doge with defiance."

"True, reverend monk; I cannot do this; nor would it be well for him who could to trust his fortune on so reckless a risk. But

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the states of St. Mark do not cover the earth —we can fly."

"The senate hath a long arm; and it hath a thousand secret hands."

"None know it better than I; still it does no violence without motive; the faith of their ward irretrievably mine, the evil, as respects them, becomes irreparable."

"Think'st thou so! Means would quickly be found to separate you. Believe not that Venice would be thwarted of its design so easily; the wealth of a house like this would purchase many an unworthy suitor, and thy right would be disregarded, or haply denied."

"But, Father, the ceremony of the Church may not be despised!" exclaimed Violetta; "it comes from heaven and is sacred."

"Daughter, I say it with sorrow; but the great and the powerful find means even to set aside that venerable and holy sacrament. Thine own gold would serve to seal thy misery."

"This might arrive, Father, were we to continue within the grasp of St. Mark," interrupted the Neapolitan; "but once beyond his borders, 'twould be a bold interference with the right of a foreign state to lay hand on our persons. More than this, I have a castle in Sant' Agata, that will defy their most secret means, until events might happen which should render it more prudent for them to desist than to persevere."

"This reason hath force wert thou within the walls of Sant' Agata, instead of being, as thou art, among the canals."

"Here is one of Calabria, a vassal born of mine, a certain Stefano Milano, the padrone of a Sorrentine felucca, now lying in the port; the man is in strict amity with my own gondolier—he who was third in this day's race. Art thou ill, Father, that thou appearest troubled?"

"Proceed with thy expedient," answered the monk, montioning that he wished not be observed.

"My faithful Gino reports that this Stefano is on the canals, on some errand of the republic, as he thinks, for though the mariner is less disposed to familiarity than is wont, he hath let drop hints that lead to such a conclusion—the felucca is ready, from hour to hour, to put upon the sea, and doubt not the padrone would rather serve his natural lord than these double-dealing miscreants of the senate. I can pay as well as they, if served to my pleasure; and I can punish too, when offended."

"There is reason in this, signor, wert thou beyond the wiles of this mysterious city. But in what manner canst thou embark, without drawing the notice of those, who doubtless watch our movements, on thy person?"

"There are maskers on the canal at all hours, and if Venice be so impertinent in her system of watchfulness, thou knowest, Father, that, without extraordinary motive, that disguise is sacred. Without this narrow privilege, the town would not be habitable a day."

"I fear the result;" observed the hesitating monk, while it was evident, from the thoughtfulness of his countenance, that he calculated the chances of the adventure. "If known and arrested, we are all lost!"

"Trust me, Father, that thy fortune shall not be forgotten, even in that unhappy issue. I have an uncle, as you know, high in the favor of the pontiff, and who wears the scarlet hat. I pledge to you the honor of a cavalier, all my interest with this relative, to gain such intercession from the Church as shall weaken the blow to her servant."

The features of the Carmelite flushed, and, for the first time, the ardent young noble observed around his ascetic mouth an expression of worldly pride.

"Thou hast unjustly rated my apprehensions, lord of Sant' Agata," he said; "I fear not for myself, but for others. This tender and lovely child hath not been confided to my care, without creating a parental solicitude in her behalf, and"—he paused, and seemed to struggle with himself—"I have too long known the mild and womanly virtues of Donna Florinda, to witness, with indifference, her exposure to a near and fearful danger. Abandon our charge, we cannot; nor do I see in what manner, as prudent and watchful guardians, we may in any manner consent to this risk. Let us hope that they who govern will yet consult the honor and happiness of Donna Violetta."

"That were to hope the winged lion would become a lamb, or the dark and soulless senate a community of self-mortifying and

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godly Carthusians! No, reverend monk, we must seize the happy moment, and none is likely to be more fortunate than this, or trust our hopes to a cold and calculating policy, that disregards all motives but its own object. An hour, nay, half the time, would suffice to apprise the mariner, and ere the morning light, we might see the domes of Venice sinking into their own hated Lagunes."

"These are the plans of confident youth, quickened by passion. Believe me, son, it is not easy as thou imaginest, to mislead the agents of the police. This palace could not be quitted, the felucca entered, or any one of the many necessary steps hazarded, without drawing upon us their eyes. Hark!—I hear the wash of oars—a gondola is even now at the water-gate!"

Donna Florinda went hastily to the balcony, and as quickly returned to report that she had seen an officer of the republic enter the palace. There was no time to lose, and Don Camillo was again urged to conceal himself in the little oratory. This necessary caution had hardly been observed before the door of the room opened, and the privileged messenger of the senate announced his own appearance. It was the very individual who had presided at the fearful execution of the fisherman, and who had already announced the cessation of the Signor Gradenigo's powers. His eye glanced suspiciously around the room, as he entered, and the Carmelite trembled in every limb, at the look which encountered his own. But all immediate apprehensions vanished, when the usual artful smile, with which he was wont to soften his disagreeable communications, took the place of the momentary expression of a vague and an habitual suspicion.

"Noble lady," he said, bowing with deference to the rank of her he addressed, "you may learn by this assiduity on the part of their servant, the interest which the senate takes in your welfare. Anxious to do you pleasure, and ever attentive to the wishes of one so young, it hath been decided to give you the amusement and variety of another scene at a season when the canals of our city become disagreeable from their warmth and the crowds which live in the air. I am sent to request you will make such preparations as may befit your convenience during a few months' residence in a purer atmosphere, and that this may be done speedily; as your journey, always to prevent discomfort to yourself, will commence before the rising of the sun."

"This is short notice, signor, for a female about to quit the dwelling of her ancestors!"

"St. Mark suffers his love and parental care to overlook the vain ceremonies of form. It is thus the parent dealeth with the child. There is little need of unusual notice, since it will be the business of the government to see all that is necessary dispatched to the residence which is to be honored with the presence of so illustrious a lady."

"For myself, signor, little preparation is needed. But I fear that the train of servitors, that befit my condition, will require more leisure for their arrangements."

"Lady, that embarrassment hath been foreseen, and to remove it the council hath decided to supply you with the only attendant you will require, during an absence from the city which will be so short."

"How, signor! am I to be separated from my people?"

"From the hired menials of your palace, lady, to be confided to those who will serve your person from a nobler motive."

"And my maternal friend—my ghostly adviser?"

"They will be permitted to repose from their trusts during your absence."

An exclamation from Donna Florinda, and an involuntary movement of the monk, betrayed their mutual concern. Donna Violetta suppressed the exhibition of her own resentment, and of her wounded affections, by a powerful effort, in which she was greatly sustained by her pride; but she could not entirely conceal the anguish of another sort that was seated in her eye.

"Do I understand that this prohibition extends to her, who, in common, serves my person?"

"Signora, such are my instructions."

"Is it expected that Violetta Tiepolo will do these menial offices for herself?"

"Siguora, no. A most excellent and agreeable attendant has been provided for that duty. Annina," he continued, approach-

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ing the door, "thy noble mistress is impatient to see thee."

As he spoke the daughter of the wine-seller appeared. She wore an air of assumed humility, but it was accompanied by a secret mien that betrayed independence of the pleasure of her new mistress.

"And this damsel is to be my nearest confidante," exclaimed Donna Violetta, after studying the artful and demure countenance of the girl, a moment, with a dislike she did not care to conceal.

"Such hath been the solicitude of your illustrious guardians, lady. As the damsel is instructed in all that is necessary, I will intrude no longer, but take my leave, recommending that you improve the hours, which are now few, between this and the rising sun, that you may profit by the morning breeze in quitting the city."

The officer glanced another look around the room, more, however, through habitual caution than any other reason, bowed, and departed.

A profound and sorrowful silence succeeded. Then the apprehension that Don Camillo might mistake their situation and appear flashed upon the mind of Violetta, and she hastened to apprise him of the danger by speaking to the new attendant.

"Thou hast served before this, Annina?" she asked so loud as to permit the words to be heard in the oratory.

"Never a lady so beautiful and illustrious, signora. But I hope to make myself agreeable to one that I hear is kind to all around her."

"Thou art not new to the flattery of thy class; go then, and acquaint my ancient attendants with this sudden resolution, that I may not disappoint the council by tardiness. I commit all to thy care, Annina, since thou knowest the pleasure of my guardians—those without will furnish the means."

The girl lingered, and her watchful observers noted suspicion and hesitation in her reluctant manner of compliance. She obeyed, however, leaving the room with the domestic Donna Violetta summoned from the antechamber. The instant the door was closed behind her, Don Camillo was in the group, and the whole four stood regarding each other in a common panic.

"Canst thou still hesitate, Father?" demanded the lover.

"Not a moment, my son, did I see the means of accomplishing flight."

"How! Thou wilt not then desert me!" exclaimed Violetta, kissing his hands in joy. "Nor thou, my second mother!"

"Neither," answered the governess, who possessed intuitive means of comprehending the resolutions of the monk; "we will go with thee, love, to the castle of Sant' Agata or to the dungeon of St. Mark."

"Virtuous and sainted Florinda, receive my thanks," cried the reprieved Violetta, clasping her hands on her bosom, with an emotion in which piety and gratitude were mingled. "Camillo, we await thy guidance."

"Refrain," observed the monk,—"a footstep—thy concealment."

Don Camillo was scarcely hid from view when Annina reappeared. She had the same suspicious manner of glancing her eye around as the official, and it would seem by the idle question she put, that her entrance had some other object than the mere pretence which she made of consulting her new mistress's humor in the color of a robe.

"Do as thou wilt, girl," said Violetta, with impatience; "thou knowest the place of my intended retirement, and canst judge of the fitness of my attire. Hasten thy preparations, that I be not the cause of delay. Enrica, attend my new maid to the wardrobe."

Annina reluctantly withdrew, for she was far too much practised in wiles not to distrust this unexpected compliance with the will of the council, or not to perceive that she was admitted with displeasure to the discharge of her new duties. As the faithful domestic of Donna Violetta kept at her side, she was fain, however, to submit, and suffered herself to be led a few steps from the door. Suddenly pretending to recollect a new question, she returned with so much rapidity, as to be again in the room, before Enrico could anticipate the intention.

"Daughter, complete thy errands, and forbear to interrupt our privacy," said the monk, sternly. "I am about to confess this penitent, who may pine long for the consolations of the holy office ere we meet again. If thou hast not aught urgent, withdraw,

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ere thou seriously givest offence to the Church."

The severity of the Carmelite's tone, and the commanding, though subdued gleaming of his eye, had the effect to awe the girl. Quailing before his keen look, and in truth startled at the risk she ran in offending against opinions so deeply seated in the minds of all, and from which her own superstitious habits were far from free, she muttered a few words of apology, and finally withdrew. There was another uneasy and suspicious glance thrown around her, however, before the door was closed. When they were once more alone, the monk motioned for silence to the impetuous Don Camillo, who could scarce restrain his impatience until the intruder departed.

"Son, be prudent," he said; "we are in the midst of treachery; in this unhappy city none know in whom they can confide."

"I think we are sure of Enrico," said the Donna Florinda, though the very doubts she affected not to feel lingered in the tones of her voice.

"It matters not, daughter; he is ignorant of the presence of Don Camillo, and in that we are safe. Duca di Sant' Agata, if you can deliver us from these toils, we will accompany you."

A cry of joy was near bursting from the lips of Violetta; but, obedient to the eye of the monk, she turned to her lover as if to learn his decision. The expression of Don Camillo's face was the pledge of his assent. Without speaking, he wrote hastily, with a pencil, a few words on the envelope of a letter, and inclosing a piece of coin in its folds, he moved with a cautious step to the balcony. A signal was given, and all awaited in breathless silence the answer. Presently they heard the wash of the water, caused by the movement of a gondola beneath the window. Stepping forward again, Don Camillo dropped the paper with such precision, that he distinctly heard the fall of the coin in the bottom of the boat. The gondolier scarce raised his eyes to the balcony, but commencing an air much used on the canals, he swept onward, like one whose duty called for no haste.

"That has succeeded!" said Don Camillo, when he heard the song of Gino. "In an hour my agent will have secured the felucca, and all now depends on our own means of quitting the palace unobserved. My people will await us, shortly, and perhaps 'twould be well to trust openly to our speed in gaining the Adriatic."

"There is a solemn and necessary duty to perform," observed the monk. "Daughters, withdraw to your rooms, and occupy yourselves with the preparation necessary for your flight, which may readily be made to appear as intended to meet the senate's pleasure. In a few minutes I shall summon you hither again."

Wondering, but obedient, the females withdrew. The Carmelite then made a brief but clear explanation of his intention. Don Camillo listened eagerly, and when the other had done speaking they retired together into the oratory. Fifteen minutes had not passed before the monk reappeared, alone, and touched the bell, which communicated with the closet of Violetta. Donna Florinda and her pupil were quickly in the room.

"Prepare thy mind for the confessional," said the priest, placing himself, with grave dignity, in that chair which he habitually used when listening to the self-accusations and failings of his spiritual child.

The brow of Violetta paled and flushed again, as if there lay a heavy sin on her conscience. She turned an imploring look on her paternal monitor, in whose mild features she met an encouraging smile, and then, with a beating heart, though ill-collected for the solemn duty, but with a decision that the occasion required, she knelt on the cushion at the feet of the monk.

The murmured language of Donna Violetta was audible to none but him for whose paternal ear it was intended, and that dread Being whose just anger it was hoped it might lessen. But Don Camillo gazed, through the half-opened door of the chapel, on the kneeling form, the clasped hands and the uplifted countenance of the beautiful penitent. As she proceeded with the acknowledgment of her errors, the flush on her cheek deepened, and a pious excitement kindled in those eyes which had so lately seen glowing with a very different passion. The ingenuous and disciplined soul of Violetta was not so quickly disburdened of its load of sin as that of the more practised

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mind of the lord of Sant' Agata. The latter fancied that he could trace in the movement of her lips the sound of his own name, and a dozen times during the confession, he thought he could even comprehend sentences of which he himself was the subject. Twice the good Father smiled, involuntarily, and at each indiscretion he laid a hand in affection on the bared head of the suppliant. But Violetta ceased to speak, and the absolution was pronounced, with a fervor that the remarkable circumstances, in which they all stood, did not fail to heighten.

When this portion of his duty was ended, the Carmelite entered the oratory. With steady hands, he lighted the candles of the altar, and made the other dispositions for the mass. During this interval Don Camillo was at the side of his mistress, whispering with the warmth of a triumphant and happy lover. The governess stood near the door, watching for the sound of footsteps in the antechamber. The monk then advanced to the entrance of the little chapel, and was about to speak, when a hurried step from Donna Florinda arrested his words. Don Camillo had just time to conceal his person within the drapery of a window, before the door opened and Annina entered.

When the preparations of the altar and the solemn countenance of the priest first met her eye, the girl recoiled with the air of one rebuked. But rallying her thoughts, with that readiness which had gained her the employment she filled, she crossed herself reverently and took a place apart, like one who, while she knew her station, wished to participate in the mysteries of the holy office.

"Daughter, none who commence this mass with us can quit the presence ere it be completed," observed the monk.

"Father, it is my duty to be near the person of my mistress, and it is a happiness to be near it on the occasion of this early matin."

The monk was embarrassed. He looked from one to the other, in indecision, and was about to frame some pretence to get rid of the intruder, when Don Camillo appeared in the middle of the room.

"Reverend monk, proceed," he said; "'tis but another witness of my happiness."

While speaking, the noble touched the handle of his sword, significantly, with a finger, and cast a look at the half-petrified Annina, which effectually controlled the exclamation that was about to escape her. The monk appeared to understand the terms of this silent compact; for with a deep voice he commenced the offices of the mass. The singularity of their situation, the important results of the act in which they were engaged, the impressive dignity of the Carmelite, and the imminent hazard which they all ran of exposure, together with the certainty of punishment for their daring to thwart the will of Venice, if betrayed, caused a deeper feeling than that which usually pervades a marriage ceremony to preside at nuptials thus celebrated. The youthful Violetta trembled at every intonation of the solemn voice of the monk, and toward the close, she leaned in helplessness on the arm of the man to whom she had just plighted her vows. The eyes of the Carmelite kindled, as he proceeded with the office, however; and, long ere he had done, he had obtained such a command over the feelings of even Annina, as to hold her mercenary spirit in awe. The final union was pronounced, and the benediction given.

"Maria, of pure memory, watch over thy happiness, daughter!" said the monk, for the first time in his life saluting the fair brow of the weeping bride,—"Duke of Sant' Agata, may thy patron hear thy prayers, as thou provest kind to this innocent and confiding child!"

"Amen!—Ha!—we are not too soon united, my Violetta; I hear the sound of oars."

A glance from the balcony assured him of the truth of his words, and rendered it apparent that it had now become necessary to take the most decided step of all. A six-oared gondola, of a size suited to endure the waves of the Adriatic at that mild season, and with a pavilion of fit dimensions, stopped at the water-gate of the palace.

"I wonder at this boldness!" exclaimed Don Camillo. "There must be no delay, lest some spy of the republic apprise the police. Away, dearest Violetta—away, Donna Florinda—Father, away!"

The governess and her charge passed swiftly into the inner rooms. In a minute, they returned bearing the caskets of Donna Violetta, and a sufficient supply of necessaries, for a short voyage. The instant they

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reappeared, all was ready; for Don Camillo had long held himself prepared for this decisive moment, and the self-denying Carmelite had little need of superfluities. It was no moment for unnecessary explanation or trivial objections.

"Our hope is in celerity," said Don Camillo; "secrecy is impossible."

He was still speaking when the monk led the way from the room. Donna Florinda and the half-breathless Violetta followed; Don Camillo drew the arm of Annina under his own, and in a low voice bid her, at her peril, refuse to obey.

The long suite of outer rooms was passed, without meeting a single observer of the extraordinary movement. But when the fugitives entered the great hall, that communicated with the principal stairs, they found themselves in the centre of a dozen menials of both sexes.

"Place," cried the Duke of Sant' Agata, whose person and voice were alike unknown to them. "Your mistress will breathe the air of the canals."

Wonder and curiosity were alive in every countenance, but suspicion and eager attention were uppermost in the features of many. The foot of Donna Violetta had scarcely touched the pavement of the lower hall, when several menials glided down the flight, and quitted the palace by its different outlets. Each sought those who engaged him in the service. One flew along the narrow streets of the island, to the residence of Signor Gradenigo; another sought his son; and one, ignorant of the person of him he served, actually searched an agent of Don Camillo, to impart a circumstance in which that noble was himself so conspicuous an actor. To such a pass of corruption had double-dealing and mystery reduced the household of the fairest and richest in Venice! The gondola lay at the marble steps of the water-gate, held against the stones by two of its crew. Don Camillo saw, at a glance, that the masked gondoliers had neglected none of the precautions he had prescribed, and he inwardly commended their punctuality. Each wore a short rapier at his girdle, and he fancied he could trace between the folds of their garments evidence of the presence of the clumsy firearms in use at that period. These observations were made while the Carmelite and Violetta entered the boat. Donna Florinda followed, and Annina was about to imitate her example, when she was arrested by the arm of Don Camillo.

"Thy service ends here," whispered the bridegroom. "Seek another mistress; in fault of a better, thou mayest devote thyself to Venice."

The little interruption caused Don Camillo to look backward, and, for a single moment, he paused to scrutinize the group of eyes that crowded the hall of the palace, at a respectful distance.

"Adieu, my friends!" he added. "Those among ye who love your mistress shall be remembered."

He would have said more, but a rude seizure of his arms caused him to turn hastily away. He was firm in the grasp of the two gondoliers who had landed. While he was yet in too much astonishment to struggle, Annina, obedient to a signal, darted past him and leaped into the boat. The oars fell into the water; Don Camillo was repelled by a violent shove backward into the hall, the gondoliers stepped lightly into their places, and the gondola swept away from the steps beyond the power of him they left to follow.

"Gino!—miscreant!—what means this treachery?"

The moving of the parting gondola was accompanied by no other sound than the usual washing of the water. In speechless agony, Don Camillo saw the boat glide, swifter and swifter at each stroke of the oars, along the canal, and then, whirling around the angle of a palace, disappear.

Venice admitted not of pursuit like another city, for there was no passage along the canal taken by the gondola, but by water. Several of the boats used by the family lay within the piles on the great canal, at the principal entrance, and Don Camillo was about to rush into one, and to seize its oars, with his own hands, when the usual sounds announced the approach of a gondola from the direction of the bridge, that had so long served as a place of concealment to his own domestic. It soon issued from the obscurity, cast by the shadows of the houses, and proved to be a large gondola, pulled, like the one which had just disappeared, by six masked gondoliers. The

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resemblance between the equipments of the two was so exact, that at first not only the wondering Camillo, but all the others present, fancied the latter, by some extraordinary speed, had already made the tour of the adjoining palaces, and was once more approaching the private entrance of that of Donna Violetta.

"Gino!" cried the bewildered bridegroom.

"Signor mio?" answered the faithful domestic.

"Draw nearer, varlet. What meaneth this idle trifling, at a moment like this?"

Don Camillo leaped a fearful distance, and happily he reached the gondola. To pass the men and rush into the canopy needed but a moment; to perceive that it was empty was the work of a glance.

"Villains, have you dared to be false?" cried the confounded noble.

At that instant the clock of the city began to tell the hour of two, and it was only as that appointed signal sounded heavy and melancholy on the night-air, that the undeceived Camillo got a certain glimpse of the truth.

"Gino," he said, repressing his voice, like one summoning a desperate resolution—"are thy fellows true?"

"As faithful as your own vassals, signor."

"And thou didst not fail to deliver the note to my agent?"

"He had it before the ink was dry, eccellenza."

"The mercenary villain!—He told thee where to find the gondola, equipped as I see it?"

"Signor, he did; and I do the man the justice to say that nothing is wanting, either to speed or comfort."

"Ay, he even deals in duplicates, so tender is his care!" muttered Don Camillo, between his teeth.—"Pull away, men; your own safety and my happiness now depend on your arms. A thousand ducats if you equal my hopes—my just anger if you disappoint them!"

Don Camillo threw himself on the cushions as he spoke, in bitterness of heart, though he seconded his words by a gesture which bid the men proceed. Gino, who occupied the stern and managed the directing oar, opened a small window in the canopy, which communicated with the interior, and bent to take his master's directions as the boat sprang ahead. Rising from his stooping posture, the practised gondolier gave a sweep with his blade which caused the sluggish element of the narrow canal to whirl in eddies, and then the gondola glided into the great canal, as if it obeyed an instinct.

CHAPTER XVII.

Why liest thou so on the green earth?
'Tis not the hour of slumber:—why so pale?—*Cain.*

NOTWITHSTANDING his apparent decision, the Duke of Sant' Agata was completely at a loss in what manner to direct his future movements. That he had been duped, by one or more of the agents to whom he had been compelled to confide his necessary preparations for the flight he had meditated several days, was too certain to admit of his deceiving himself with the hope that some unaccountable mistake was the cause of his loss. He saw, at once, that the senate was master of the person of his bride, and he too well knew its power, and its utter disregard of human obligations, when any paramount interest of the state was to be consulted, to doubt for an instant its willingness to use its advantage, in any manner that was most likely to contribute to its own views. By the premature death of her uncle, Donna Violetta had become the heiress of vast estates in the dominions of the Church, and a compliance with that jealous and arbitrary law of Venice, which commanded all of its nobles to dispose of any foreign possessions they might acquire, was only suspended on account of her sex, and, as has already been seen, with the hope of disposing of her hand in a manner that would prove more profitable to the republic. With this object still before them, and with the means of accomplishing it in their own hands, the bridegroom well knew that his marriage would not only be denied, but he feared the witnesses of the ceremony would be so disposed of, as to give little reason ever to expect embarrassment from their testimony. For himself, personally, he felt less apprehension, though he foresaw that he had furnished his opponents with an argument that was likely to defer to an indefinite period,

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if it did not entirely defeat, his claims to the disputed succession. But he had already made up his mind to this result, though it is probable that his passion for Violetta had not entirely blinded him to the fact that her Roman seigniories would be no unequal offset for the loss. He believed that he might possibly return to his palace with impunity, so far as any personal injury was concerned; for the great consideration he enjoyed in his native land, and the high interest he possessed at the court of Rome, were sufficient pledges that no open violence would be done him. The chief reason why his claims had been kept in suspense, was the wish to profit by his near connexion with the favorite cardinal, and though he had never been able entirely to satisfy the ever-increasing demands of the council, in this respect, he thought it probable that the power of the Vatican would not be spared, to save him from any very imminent personal hazard. Still he had given the state of Venice plausible reasons for severity, and liberty, just at that moment, was of so much importance, that he dreaded falling into the hands of the officials, as one of the greatest misfortunes which could momentarily overtake him. He so well knew the crooked policy of those with whom he had to deal, that he believed he might be arrested solely that the government could make an especial merit of his future release, under circumstances of so seeming gravity. His order to Gino, therefore, had been to pull down the principal passage toward the port.

Before the gondola, which sprung at each united effort of its crew, like some bounding animal, entered among the shipping, its master had time to recover his self-possession, and to form some hasty plans for the future. Making a signal for the crew to cease rowing, he came from beneath the canopy. Notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, boats were plying on the water within the town, and the song was still audible on the canals. But among the mariners a general stillness prevailed, such as befitted their toil during the day, and their ordinary habits.

"Call the first idle gondolier of thy acquaintance hither, Gino," said Don Camillo, with assumed calmness; "I would question him."

In less than a minute he was gratified.

"Hast seen any strongly manned gondola plying, of late, in this part of the canal?" demanded Don Camillo, of the man they had stopped.

"None, but this of your own, signor; which is the fastest of all that passed beneath the Rialto, in this day's regatta."

"How knowest thou, friend, aught of the speed of my boat?"

"Signor, I have pulled an oar on the canals of Venice six-and-twenty years, and I do not remember to have seen a gondola move more swiftly on them than did this very boat but a few minutes ago, when it dashed among the feluccas, further down in the port, as if it were again running for the oar. Corpo di Bacco! There are rich wines in the palaces of the nobles, that men can give such life to wood!"

"Whither did we steer?" eagerly asked Don Camillo.

"Blessed San Teodoro! I do not wonder, eccellenza, that you ask that question, for though it is but a moment since, here I see you lying as motionless on the water as a floating weed!"

"Friend, here is silver—addio."

The gondolier swept slowly onward, singing a strain in honor of his bark, while the boat of Don Camillo darted ahead. Mystic, felucca, xebec, brigantine, and three-masted ship, were apparently floating past them as they shot through the maze of shipping, when Gino bent forward and drew the attention of his master to a large gondola, which was pulling with a lazy oar toward them, from the direction of the Lido. Both boats were in a wide avenue in the midst of the vessels, the usual track of those who went to sea, and there was no object whatever between them. By changing the course of his own boat, Don Camillo soon found himself within an oar's length of the other. He saw, at a glance, it was the treacherous gondola by which he had been duped.

"Draw, men, and follow!" shouted the desperate Neapolitan, preparing to leap into the midst of his enemies.

"You draw against St. Mark!" cried a warning voice from beneath the canopy. "The chances are unequal, signor; for the smallest signal would bring twenty galleys to our succor."

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Don Camillo might have disregarded this menace, had he not perceived that it caused the half-drawn rapiers of his followers to return to their scabbards.

"Robber!" he answered, "restore her whom you have spirited away."

"Signor, you young nobles are often pleased to play your extravagancies with the servants of the republic. Here are none but the gondoliers and myself." A movement of the boat permitted Don Camillo to look into the covered part, and he saw that the other uttered no more than the truth. Convinced of the uselessness of farther parley, knowing the value of every moment, and believing he was on a track which might still lead to success, the young Neapolitan signed to his people to go on. The boats parted in silence, that of Don Camillo proceeding in the direction from which the other had just come.

In a short time the gondola of Don Camillo was in an open part of the Guidecca, and entirely beyond the tiers of the shipping. It was so late that the moon had begun to fall, and its light was cast obliquely on the bay, throwing the eastern sides of the buildings and the other objects into shadow. A dozen different vessels were seen, aided by the land-breeze, steering towards the entrance of the port. The rays of the moon fell upon the broad surface of those sides of their canvas which were nearest to the town, and they resembled so many spotless clouds, sweeping the water and floating seaward.

"They are sending my wife to Dalmatia!" cried Don Camillo, like a man on whom the truth began to dawn.

"Signor mio!" exclaimed the astonished Gino.

"I tell thee, sirrah, that this accursed senate hath plotted against my happiness, and having robbed me of thy mistress, hath employed one of the many feluccas that I see, to transport her to some of its strongholds, on the eastern coast of the Adriatic."

"Blessed Maria! Signor Duca, and my honored master; they say that the very images of stone in Venice have ears, and that the horses of bronze will kick, if an evil word is spoken against those up above."

"Is it not enough, varlet, to draw curses from the meek Job, to rob him of a wife? Hast thou no feeling for thy mistress?"

"I did not dream, eccellenza, that you were so happy as to have the one, or that I was so honored as to have the other."

"Thou remindest me of my folly, good Gino. In aiding me on this occasion, thou wilt have thy own fortune in view, as thy efforts, like those of thy fellows, will be made in behalf of the lady to whom I have just plighted a husband's vows."

'San Teodoro help us all, and hint what is to be done! The lady is most happy, Signor Don Camillo, and if I only knew by what name to mention her, she should never be forgotten in any prayer that so humble a sinner might dare to offer."

"Thou hast not forgotten the beautiful lady I drew from the Giudecca?"

"Corpo di Bacco! Your eccellenza floated like a swan, and swam faster than a gull. Forgotten! Signor, no,—I think of it every time I hear a plash in the canals, and every time I think of it I curse the Anconaman in my heart. St. Theodore forgive me, if it be unlike a Christian to do so. But, though we all tell marvels of what our lord did in the Giudecca, the dip of its waters is not the marriage ceremony, nor can we speak with much certainty of beauty, that was seen to so great disadvantage."

"Thou art right, Gino.—But that lady, the illustrious Donna Violetta Tiepolo, the daughter and heiress of a famed senator, is now thy mistress. It remains for us to establish her in the Castle of Sant' Agata, where I shall defy Venice and its agents."

Gino bowed his head in submission, though he cast a look behind, to make sure that none of those agents, whom his master set so openly at defiance, were within earshot.

In the meantime the gondola proceeded, for the dialogue in no manner interrupted the exertions of Gino, still holding the direction of the Lido. As the land-breeze freshened, the different vessels in sight glided away, and by the time Don Camillo reached the barrier of sand, which separates the Lagunes from the Adriatic, most of them had glided through the passages, and were now shaping their courses, according to their different destinations, across the open gulf. The young noble had permitted his people to pursue the direction originally taken, in pure indecision. He was certain that his

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bride was in one of the many barks in sight, but he possessed no clew to lead him toward the right one, nor any sufficient means of pursuit, were he even master of that important secret. When he landed, therefore, it was with the simple hope of being able to form some general conjecture as to the portion of the republic's dominions in which he might search for her he had lost, by observing to what part of the Adriatic the different feluccas held their way. He had determined on immediate pursuit, however, and before he quitted the gondola, he once more turned to his confidential gondolier to give the necessary instructions.

"Thou knowest, Gino," he said, "that there is one born a vassal on my estates, here in the port, with a felucca from the Sorrentine shore?"

"I know the man better than I know my own faults, signor, or even my own virtues."

"Go to him, at once, and make sure of his presence. I have imagined a plan to decoy him into the service of his lord; but I would now know the condition of his vessel."

Gino said a few words in commendation of the zeal of his friend Stefano, and in praise of the Bella Sorrentina, as the gondola receded from the shore; and then he dashed his oar into the water, like a man in earnest to execute the commission.

There is a lonely spot on the Lido di Palestrina, where Catholic exclusion has decreed that the remains of all who die in Venice, without the pale of the Church of Rome, shall moulder into their kindred dust. Though it is not distant from the ordinary landing and the few buildings which line the shore, it is a place that, in itself, is no bad emblem of a hopeless lot. Solitary, exposed equally to the hot airs of the south and the bleak blasts of the Alps, frequently covered with the spray of the Adriatic, and based on barren sands, the utmost that human art, aided by a soil which has been fattened by human remains, can do, has been to create around the modest graves a meagre vegetation, that is in slight contrast to the sterility of most of the bank. This place of interment is without the relief of trees, at the present day it is uninclosed, and in the opinions of those who have set it apart for heretic and Jew, it is unblessed. And yet, though condemned alike to this, the last indignity which man can inflict on his fellow, the two proscribed classes furnish a melancholy proof of the waywardness of human passions and prejudice, by refusing to share in common the scanty pittance of earth, which bigotry has allowed for their everlasting repose! While the Protestant sleeps by the side of Protestant in exclusive obloquy, the children of Israel moulder apart on the same barren heath, sedulous to preserve, even in the grave, the outward distinctions of faith. We shall not endeavor to seek that deeply-seated principle which renders men so callous to the most eloquent and striking appeals to liberality, but rest satisfied with being grateful that we have been born in a land in which the interests of religion are as little as possible sullied by the vicious contamination of those of life; in which Christian humility is not exhibited beneath the purple, nor Jewish adhesion by intolerance; in which man is left to care for the welfare of his own soul, and in which, so far as the human eye can penetrate, God is worshipped for himself.

Don Camillo Monforte landed near the retired graves of the proscribed. As he wished to ascend the low sand-hills, which have been thrown up by the waves and the winds of the gulf, on the outer edge of the Lido, it was necessary that he should pass directly across the contemned spot, or make such a circuit as would have been inconvenient. Crossing himself, with a superstition that was interwoven with all his habits and opinions, and loosening his rapier, in order that he might not miss the succor of that good weapon, at need, he moved across the heath tenanted by the despised dead, taking care to avoid the mouldering heaps of earth which lay above the bones of heretic or Jew. He had not threaded more than half the graves, however, when a human form arose from the grass, and seemed to walk like one who mused on the moral that the piles at his feet would be apt to excite. Again Don Camillo touched the handle of his rapier; then moving aside, in a manner to give himself an equal advantage from the light of the moon, he drew near the stranger. His footstep was heard, for the other paused, regarded the approaching cavalier, and folding his arms, as it might

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be in sign of neutrality, awaited his nearer approach.

"Thou hast chosen a melancholy hour for thy walk, signor," said the young Neapolitan; "and a still more melancholy scene. I hope I do not intrude on an Israelite, or a Lutheran, who mourns for his friend?"

"Don Camillo Monforte, I am, like yourself, a Christian."

"Ha! Thou knowest me—'tis Battista, the gondolier that I once entertained in my household?"

"Signor, 'tis not Battista."

As he spoke, the stranger faced the moon, in a manner that threw all of its mild light upon his features.

"Jacopo!" exclaimed the duke, recoiling, as did all in Venice habitually, when that speaking eye was unexpectedly met.

"Signor—Jacopo."

In a moment the rapier of Don Camillo glittered in the rays of the moon.

"Keep thy distance, fellow, and explain the motive that hath brought thee thus across my solitude!"

The Bravo smiled, but his arms maintained their fold.

"I might, with equal justice, call upon the Duke of Sant' Agata to furnish reasons why he wanders at this hour among the Hebrew graves."

"Nay, spare thy pleasantry; I trifle not with men of thy reputation; if any in Venice have thought fit to employ thee against my person, thou wilt have need of all thy courage and skill, ere thou earnest thy fee."

"Put up thy rapier, Don Camillo; here is none to do you harm. Think you, if employed in the manner you name, I would be in this spot to seek you? Ask yourself whether your visit here was known, or whether it was more than the idle caprice of a young noble, who finds his bed less easy than his gondola. We have met, Duke of Sant' Agata, when you distrusted my honor less."

"Thou speakest true, Jacopo;" returned the noble, suffering the point of his rapier to fall from before the breast of the Bravo, though he still hesitated to withdraw the point. "Thou sayest the truth. My visit to this spot is indeed accidental, and thou could'st not have possibly foreseen it. Why art thou here?"

Why are these here?" demanded Jacopo, pointing to the graves at his feet. "We are born, and we die—that much is known to us all; but the when and the where are mysteries, until time reveals them."

"Thou art not a man to act without good motive. Though these Israelites could not foresee their visit to the Lido, thine hath not been without intention."

"I am here, Don Camillo Monforte, because my spirit hath need of room. I want the air of the sea—the canals choke me—I can only breathe in freedom on this bank of sand!"

"Thou hast another reason, Jacopo?"

"Ay, signor—I loathe you city of crimes!"

As the Bravo spoke, he shook his hand in the direction of the domes of St. Mark, and the deep tones of his voice appeared to heave up from the depths of his chest.

"This is extraordinary language for a——"

"Bravo; speak the word boldly, signor—it is no stranger to my ears. But even the stiletto of a Bravo is honorable, compared to that sword of pretended justice which St. Mark wields! The commonest hireling of Italy—he who will plant his dagger in the heart of his friend for two sequins, is a man of open dealing, compared to the merciless treachery of some in yonder town!"

"I understand thee, Jacopo; thou art, at length, proscribed. The public voice, faint as it is in the republic, has finally reached the ears of thy employers, and they withdraw their protection."

"Jacopo regarded the noble, for an instant, with an expression so ambiguous as to cause the latter insensibly to raise the point of his rapier, but when he answered, it was with his ordinary quiet.

"Signor Duca," he said, "I have been thought worthy to be retained by Don Camillo Monforte!"

"I deny it not—and now that thou recallest the occasion, new light breaks in upon me. Villain, to thy faithlessness I owe the loss of my bride!"

Though the rapier was at the very throat of Jacopo, he did not flinch. Gazing at his excited companion, he laughed in a smothered manner, but bitterly.

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"It would seem that the Lord of Sant' Agata wishes to rob me of my trade," he said. "Arise, ye Israelites, and bear witness, less men doubt the fact! A common bravo of the canals is waylaid, among your despised graves, by the proudest signor of Calabria! You have chosen your spot, in mercy, Don Camillo, for sooner or later this crumbling and sea-worn earth is to receive me. Were I to die at the altar itself, with the most penitent prayer of holy Church on my lips, the bigots would send my body to rest among those hungry Hebrews and accursed heretics. Yes, I am a man proscribed, and unfit to sleep with the faithful!"

His companion spoke with so strange a mixture of irony and melancholy, that the purpose of Don Camillo wavered. But remembering his loss, he shook the rapier's point, and continued—

"Thy taunts and effrontery will not avail thee, knave;" he cried. "Thou knowest that I would have engaged thee as the leader of a chosen band, to favor the flight of one dear from Venice."

"Nothing more true, signor."

"And thou didst refuse the service?"

"Noble duke, I did."

"Not content with this, having learned the particulars of my project, thou sold the secret to the senate?"

"Don Camillo Monforte, I did not. My engagements with the council would not permit me to serve you; else, by the brightest star of yonder vault! it would have gladdened my heart to have witnessed the happiness of two young and faithful lovers. No—no—no; they know me not, who think I cannot find pleasure in the joy of another. I told you that I was the senate's—and there the matter ended."

"And I had the weakness to believe thee, Jacopo, for thou hast a character so strangely compounded of good and evil, and bearest so fair a name for observance of thy faith, that the seeming frankness of the answer lulled me to security. Fellow, I have been betrayed, and that at the moment when I thought success most sure."

Jacopo manifested interest, but, as he moved slowly on, accompanied by the vigilant and zealous noble, he smiled coldly, like one who had pity for the other's credulity.

"In bitterness of soul, I have cursed the whole race for its treachery;" continued the Neapolitan.

"This is rather for the priore of St. Mark, than for the ear of one who carries a public stiletto."

"My gondola has been imitated—the liveries of my people copied—my bride stolen. —Thou answerest not, Jacopo?"

"What answer would you have? You have been cozened, signor, in a state, whose very prince dare not trust his secrets to his wife. You would have robbed Venice of an heiress, and Venice has robbed you of a bride. You have played high, Don Camillo, and have lost a heavy stake. You have thought of your own wishes and rights, while you have pretended to serve Venice with the Spaniard."

Don Camillo started in surprise.

"Why this wonder, signor?—You forget that I have lived much among those who weigh the chances of every political interest, and that your name is often in their mouths. This marriage is doubly disagreeable to Venice, who has nearly as much need of the bridegroom as of the bride. The council hath long ago forbidden the banns."

"Ay—but the means?—explain the means by which I have been duped, lest the treachery be ascribed to thee."

"Signor, the very marbles of the city give up their secrets to the state. I have seen much, and understood much, when my superiors have believed me merely a tool; but I have seen much that even those who employed me could not comprehend. I could have foretold this consummation of your nuptials, had I known of their celebration."

"This thou could'st not have done, without being an agent of their treachery."

"The schemes of the selfish may be foretold; it is only the generous and the honest that baffle calculation. He who can gain a knowledge of the present interest of Venice is master of her dearest secrets of state; for what she wishes she will do, unless the service cost too dear. As for the means—how can they be wanting in a household like yours, signor?"

"I trusted none but those deepest in my confidence."

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"Don Camillo, there is not a servitor in

your palace, Gino alone excepted, who is not a hireling of the senate, or of its agents. The very gondoliers, who row you to your daily pleasures, have had their hands crossed with the republic's sequins. Nay, they are not only paid to watch you, but to watch each other."

"Can this be true!"

"Have you ever doubted it, signor?" asked Jacopo, looking up like one who admired at another's simplicity.

"I knew them to be false—pretenders to a faith that in secret they mock; but I had not believed they dared to tamper with the very menials of my person. This undermining of the security of families is to destroy society at its core!"

"You talk like one who hath not been long a bridegroom, signor;" said the Bravo with a hollow laugh. "A year hence, you may know what it is to have your own wife turning your secret thoughts into gold."

"And thou servest them, Jacopo?"

"Who does not, in some manner suited to his habits? We are not masters of our fortune, Don Camillo, or the Duke of Sant' Agata would not be turning his influence with a relative, to the advantage of the republic. What I have done hath not been done without bitter penitence, and an agony of soul, that your own light servitude may have spared you, signor."

"Poor Jacopo!"

"If I have lived through it all, 'tis because one mightier than the state hath not deserted me. But, Don Camillo Monforte, there are crimes which pass beyond the powers of man to endure."

The Bravo shuddered, and he moved among the despised graves, in silence.

"They have then proved too ruthless even for thee?" said Don Camillo, who watched the contracting eye and heaving form of his companion, in wonder.

"Signor, they have. I have witnessed, this night, a proof of their heartlessness and bad faith, that hath caused me to look forward to my own fate. The delusion is over; from this hour I serve them no longer."

The Bravo spoke with deep feeling, and his companion fancied, strange as it was coming from such a man, with an air of wounded integrity. Don Camillo knew that there was no condition of life, however degraded or lost to the world, which had not its own particular opinions of the faith due to its fellows; and he had seen enough of the sinuous course of the oligarchy of Venice, to understand that it was quite possible its shameless and irresponsible duplicity might offend the principles of even an assassin. Less odium was attached to men of that class, in Italy and at that day, than will be easily imagined in a country like this; for the radical defects and the vicious administration of the laws, caused an irritable and sensitive people too often to take into their own hands, the right of redressing their own wrongs. Custom had lessened the odium of the crime, and though society denounced the assassin himself, it is scarcely too much to say, that his employer was regarded with little more disgust than the religious of our time regard the survivor of a private combat. Still it was not usual for nobles like Don Camillo to hold intercourse, beyond that which the required service exacted, with men of Jacopo's cast; but the language and manner of the Bravo so strongly attracted the curiosity, and even the sympathy of his companion, that the latter unconsciously sheathed his rapier and drew nearer.

"Thy penitence and regrets, Jacopo, may lead thee yet nearer to virtue," he said, "than mere abandonment of the senate's service. Seek out some godly priest, and ease thy soul, by confession and prayer."

The Bravo trembled in every limb, and his eye turned wistfully to the countenance of the other.

"Speak, Jacopo; even I will hear thee, if thou would'st remove the mountain from thy breast."

"Thanks, noble signor! a thousand thanks for this glimpse of sympathy, to which I have long been a stranger! None know how dear a word of kindness is, as he who has been condemned by all, as I have been. I have prayed—I have craved—I have wept for some ear to listen to my tale, and I thought I had found one who would have heard me without scorn, when the cold policy of the senate struck him. I came here to commune with the hated dead, when chance brought us together. Could I——" the

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Bravo paused and looked doubtfully, again, at his companion.

"Say on, Jacopo."

"I have not dared to trust my secrets even to the confessional, signor, and can I be so bold as to offer them to you?"

"Truly, it is a strange behest!"

"Signor, it is. You are noble, I am of humble blood. Your ancestors were senators and doges of Venice, while mine have been, since the fishermen first built their huts in the Lagunes, laborers on the canals, and rowers of gondolas. You are powerful and rich, and courted; while I am denounced, and, in secret, I fear, condemned. In short, you are Don Camillo Monforte, and I am Jacopo Frontoni!"

Don Camillo was touched, for the Bravo spoke without bitterness, and in deep sorrow.

"I would thou wert at the confessional, poor Jacopo!" he said; "I am little able to give ease to such a burden."

"Signor, I have lived too long shut out from the good wishes of my fellows, and I can bear with it no longer. The accursed senate may cut me off without warning, and then who will stop to look at my grave. Signor, I must speak, or die!"

"Thy case is piteous, Jacopo!—Thou hast need of ghostly counsel."

"Here is no priest, signor, and I carry a weight past bearing. The only man who has shown interest in me, for three long and dreadful years, is gone!"

"But he will return, poor Jacopo."

"Signor, he will never return. He is with the fishes of the Lagunes."

"By thy hand, monster!"

"By the justice of the illustrious republic," said the Bravo, with a smothered but bitter smile.

"Ha! they are then awake to the acts of thy class? Thy repentance is the fruit of fear!"

Jacopo seemed choked. He had evidently counted on the awakened sympathy of his companion notwithstanding the difference in their situations, and to be thus thrown off again, unmanned him. He shuddered and every muscle and nerve appeared about to yield its power. Touched by so unequivocal signs of suffering, Don Camillo kept close at his side, reluctant to enter more deeply into the feelings of one of his known character, and yet unable to desert a fellow-creature in so grievous agony.

"Signor Duca," said the Bravo, with a pathos in his voice that went to the heart of his auditor, "leave me. If they ask for a proscribed man, let them come here; in the morning they will find my body near the graves of the heretics."

"Speak, I will hear thee."

Jacopo looked up with doubt expressed on his features.

"Unburden thyself; I will listen, though thou recounted the assassination of my dearest friend."

The oppressed Bravo gazed at him, as if he still distrusted his sincerity. His face worked, and his look became still more wistful; but as Don Camillo faced the moon, and betrayed the extent of his sympathy, the other burst into tears.

"Jacopo, I will hear thee—I will hear thee, poor Jacopo!" cried Don Camillo, shocked at this exhibiton of distress in one so stern by nature. A wave from the hand of the Bravo silenced him, and Jacopo, struggling with himself for a moment, spoke.

"You have saved a soul from perdition, signor," he said, smothering his emotion. "If the happy knew how much power belongs to a single word of kindness—a glance of feeling, when given to the despised, they would not look so coldly on the miserable. This night must have been my last, had you cast me off without pity—but you will hear my tale, signor—you will not scorn the confession of a Bravo?"

"I have promised. Be brief, for at this moment I have great care of my own."

"Signor, I know not the whole of your wrongs, but they will not be less likely to be redressed for this grace."

Jacopo made an effort to command himself, when he commenced his tale.

The course of the narrative does not require that we should accompany this extraordinary man through the relation of the secrets he imparted to Don Camillo. It is enough, for our present purposes, to say that, as he proceeded, the young Calabrian noble drew nearer to his side, and listened with growing interest. The Duke of Sant' Agata scarcely breathed, while his companion, with that energy of

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language and feeling which marks Italian character, recounted his secret sorrows, and the scenes in which he had been an actor. Long before he was done, Don Camillo had forgotten his own private causes of concern, and, by the time the tale was finished, every shade of disgust had given place to an ungovernable expression of pity. In short, so eloquent was the speaker, and so interesting the facts with which he dealt, that he seemed to play with the sympathies of the listener, as the improvisatore of that region is known to lead captive the passions of the admiring crowd.

During the time Jacopo was speaking, he and his wondering auditor had passed the limits of the despised cemetery; and as the voice of the former ceased, they stood on the outer beach of the Lido. When the low tones of the Bravo were no longer audible, they were succeeded by the sullen wash of the Adriatic.

"This surpasseth belief!" Don Camillo exclaimed, after a long pause, which had only been disturbed by the rush and retreat of the waters.

"Signor, as holy Maria is kind! it is true."

"I doubt you not, Jacopo—poor Jacopo! I cannot distrust a tale thus told! Thou hast, indeed, been a victim of their hellish duplicity, and well mayest thou say, the load was past bearing. What is thy intention?"

"I serve them no longer, Don Camillo—I wait only for the last solemn scene, which is now certain, and then I quit this city of deceit, to seek my fortune in another region. They have blasted my youth, and loaded my name with infamy.—God may yet lighten the load!"

"Reproach not thyself beyond reason, Jacopo, for the happiest and most fortunate of us all are not above the power of temptation. Thou knowest that even my name and rank have not, altogether, protected me from their arts."

"I know them capable, signor, of deluding angels! Their arts are only surpassed by their means, and their pretence of virtue by their indifference to its practice."

"Thou sayest true, Jacopo; the truth is never in greater danger than when whole communities lend themselves to the vicious deception of seemliness, and without truth there is no virtue. This it is to substitute profession for practice—to use the altar for a worldly purpose—and to bestow power without any other responsibility than that which is exacted by the selfishness of caste! Jacopo—poor Jacopo! thou shalt be my servitor—I am lord of my own seigniories, and once rid of this specious republic, I charge myself with the care of thy safety and fortunes. Be at peace as respects thy conscience: I have interest near the Holy See, and thou shalt not want absolution!"

The gratitude of the Bravo was more vivid in feeling than in expression. He kissed the hand of Don Camillo, but it was with a reservation of self-respect that belonged to the character of the man.

"A system like this of Venice," continued the musing noble, "leaves none of us masters of our own acts. The wiles of such a combination are stronger than the will. It cloaks its offences against right in a thousand specious forms, and it enlists the support of every man under the pretence of a sacrifice for the common good. We often fancy ourselves simple dealers in some justifiable state intrigue, when in truth we are deep in sin. Falsehood is the parent of all crimes, and in no case has it a progeny so numerous as that in which its own birth is derived from the state. I fear I may have made sacrifices, to this treacherous influence, I could wish forgotten."

Though Don Camillo soliloquized, rather than addressed his companion, it was evident, by the train of his thoughts, that the narrative of Jacopo had awakened disagreeable reflections, on the manner in which he had pushed his own claims with the senate. Perhaps he felt the necessity of some apology to one who, though so much his inferior in rank, was so competent to appreciate his conduct, and who had just denounced in the strongest language, his own fatal subserviency to the arts of that irresponsible and meretricious body.

Jacopo uttered a few words of a general nature, but such as had a tendency to quiet the uneasiness of his companion; after which, with a readiness that proved him qualified for the many delicate missions with which he had been charged, he ingeniously turned the

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discourse to the recent abduction of Donna Violetta, with the offer of rendering his new employer all the services in his power to regain his bride.

"That thou mayest know all thou hast undertaken," rejoined Don Camillo, "listen, Jacopo, and I will conceal nothing from thy shrewdness."

The Duke of Sant' Agata now briefly, but explicitly, laid bare to his companion all his own views and measures, with respect to her he loved, and all those events with which the reader has already become acquainted.

The Bravo gave great attention to the minutest parts of the detail, and more than once, as the other proceeded, he smiled to himself, like a man who was able to trace the secret means, by which this or that intrigue had been effected. The whole was just related, when the sound of a footstep announced the return of Gino.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Pale she look'd,
Yet cheerful; though methought, once, if not twice,
She wiped away a tear that would be coming.
—ROGERS.

THE hours passed as if naught had occurred, within the barriers of the city, to disturb their progress. On the following morning men proceeded to their several pursuits, of business or of pleasure, as had been done for ages, and none stopped to question his neighbor of the scene which might have taken place during the night. Some were gay, and others sorrowing; some idle, and others occupied; here one toiled, there another sported; and Venice presented, as of wont, its noiseless, suspicious, busy, mysterious, and yet stirring throngs, as it had before done at a thousand similar risings of the sun.

The menials lingered around the water-gate of Donna Violetta's palace, with distrustful but cautious faces, scarce whispering among themselves their secret suspicions of the fate of their mistress. The residence of the Signor Gradenigo presented its usual gloomy magnificence, while the abode of Don Camillo Monforte betrayed no sign of the heavy disappointment which its master had sustained. The Bella Sorrentina still lay in the port, with a yard on deck, while the crew repaired its sail in the lazy manner of mariners who work without excitement.

The Lagunes were dotted with the boats of fishermen, and travellers arrived and departed from the city, by the well-known channels of Fusina and Mestre. Here, some adventurer from the north quitted the canals, on his return toward the Alps, carrying with him a pleasing picture of the ceremonies he had witnessed, mingled with some crude conjectures of that power which predominated in the suspected state; and there, a countryman of the main sought his little farm, satisfied with the pageants and regatta of the previous day. In short, all seemed as usual, and the events we have related remained a secret with the actors, and that mysterious council which had so large a share in their existence.

As the day advanced, many a sail was spread for the Pillars of Hercules, or the genial Levant, and feluccas, mystics and gelettas, went and came as the land or sea-breeze prevailed. Still the mariner of Calabria lounged beneath the awning which sheltered his deck, or took his siesta on a pile of old sails, which were ragged with the force of many a hot sirocco. As the sun fell, the gondolas of the great and idle began to glide over the water; and when the two squares were cooled by the air of the Adriatic, the Broglio began to fill with those privileged to pace its vaulted passage. Among these came the Duke of Sant' Agata, who, though an alien to the laws of the republic, being of so illustrious descent and of claims so equitable, was received among the senators, in their moments of ease, as a welcome sharer in this vain distinction. He entered the Broglio at the wonted hour, and with his usual composure, for he trusted to his secret influence at Rome, and something to the success of his rivals, for impunity. Reflection had shown Don Camillo that, as his plans were known to the council, they would long since have arrested him, had such been their intention; and it had also led him to believe, that the most efficient manner of avoiding the personal consequences of his adventure, was to show confidence in his own power to withstand them. When he ap-

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peared, therefore, leaning on the arm of a high officer of the papal embassy, and with an eye that spoke assurance in himself, he was greeted, as usual, by all who knew him, as was due to his rank and expectations. Still Don Camillo walked among the patricians of the republic with novel sensations. More than once he thought he detected, in the wandering glances of those with whom he conversed, signs of their knowledge of his frustrated attempt, and more than once, when he least suspected such scrutiny, his countenance was watched, as if the observer sought some evidence of his future intentions. Beyond this, none might have discovered that an heiress of so much importance had been so near being lost to the state, or, on the other hand, that a bridegroom had been robbed of his bride. Habitual art, on the part of the state, and resolute but wary intention on the part of the young noble, concealed all else from observation.

In this manner the day passed, not a tongue in Venice, beyond those which whispered in secret, making any illusion to the incidents of our tale.

Just as the sun was setting, a gondola swept slowly up to the water-gate of the ducal palace. The gondolier landed, fastened his boat in the usual manner to the stepping-stones, and entered the court. He wore a mask, for the hour of disguise had come, and his attire was so like the ordinary fashion of men of his class, as to defeat recognition by its simplicity. Glancing an eye about him, he entered the building by a private door.

The edifice in which the Doges of Venice dwelt still stands a gloomy monument of the policy of the republic, furnishing evidence, in itself, of the specious character of the prince whom it held. It is built around a vast but gloomy court, as is usual with nearly all of the principal edifices of Europe. One of its fronts forms a side of the piazzetta, so often mentioned, and another lines the quay next the port. The architecture of these two exterior faces of the palace renders the structure remarkable. A low portico, which forms the Broglio, sustains a row of massive oriental windows, and above these again lies a pile of masonry, slightly relieved by apertures, which reverses the ordinary uses of the arts. A third front is nearly concealed by the cathedral of St. Mark, and the fourth is washed by its canal. The public prison of the city forms the other side of this canal, eloquently proclaiming the nature of the government by the close approximation of the powers of legislation and of punishment. The famous Bridge of Sighs is the material, and we might add the metaphorical, link between the two. The latter edifice stands on the quay, also, and though less lofty and spacious, in point of architectural beauty it is the superior structure, though the quaintness and unusual style of the palace are most apt to attract attention.

The masked gondolier soon reappeared beneath the arch of the water-gate, and with a hurried step he sought his boat. It required but a minute to cross the canal, to land on the opposite quay, and to enter the public door of the prison. It would seem that he had some secret means of satisfying the vigilance of the different keepers, for bolts were drawn, and doors unlocked, with little question, wherever he presented himself. In this manner he quickly passed all the outer barriers of the palace, and reached a part of the building which had the appearance of being fitted for the accommodation of a family. Judging from the air of all around him, those who dwelt there took the luxury of their abode but little into the account, though neither the furniture nor the rooms were wanting in most of the necessaries suited to people of their class and the climate, and in that age.

The gondolier had ascended a private stairway, and he was now before a door, which had none of those signs of a prison that so freely abounded in other parts of the building. He paused to listen, and then tapped, with singular caution.

"Who is without?" asked a gentle female voice, at the same instant that the latch moved and fell again, as if she within waited to be assured of the character of her visitor, before she opened the door.

"A friend to thee, Gelsomina;" was the answer.

"Nay, here all are friends to the keepers, if words can be believed. You must name yourself, or go elsewhere for your answer."

The gondolier removed the mask a little.

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which had altered his voice as well as concealed his face.

"It is I, Gessina," he said, using the diminutive of her name.

The bolts grated, and the door was hurriedly opened.

"It is wonderful that I did not know thee, Carlo!" said the female, with eager simplicity; "but thou takest so many disguises of late, and so counterfeitest strange voices, that thine own mother might have distrusted her ear."

The gondolier paused to make certain they were alone; then, laying aside the mask altogether, he exposed the features of the Bravo.

"Thou knowest the need of caution," he added, "and wilt not judge me harshly."

"I said not that, Carlo—but thy voice is so familiar, that I thought it wonderful thou could'st speak as a stranger."

"Hast thou aught for me?"

The gentle girl, for she was both young and gentle, hesitated.

"Hast thou aught new, Gelsomina?" repeated the Bravo, reading her innocent face with his searching glance.

"Thou art fortunate in not being sooner in the prison. I have just had a visitor. Thou would'st not have liked to be seen, Carlo?"

"Thou knowest I have good reasons for coming masked. I might, or I might not have disliked thy acquaintance, as he should have proved."

"Nay, now thou judgest wrong;" returned the female, hastily; "I had no other, here, but my cousin, Annina."

"Dost thou think me jealous?" said the Bravo, smiling in kindness, as he took her hand. "Had it been thy cousin Pietro, or Michele, or Roberto, or any other youth of Venice, I should have no other dread than that of being known."

"But it was only Annina—my cousin, Annina, whom thou hast never seen—and I have no cousins Pietro, and Michele, and Roberto. We are not many, Carlo. Annina has a brother, but he never comes hither. Indeed it is long since she has found it convenient to quit her trade to come to this dreary place. Few children of sisters see each other so seldom as Annina and I!"

"Thou art a good girl, Gessina, and art always to be found near thy mother. Hast thou naught in particular, for my ear?"

Again the soft eyes of Gelsomina, or Gessina, as she was familiarly called, dropped to the floor—but raising them, ere he could note the circumstance, she hurriedly continued the discourse.

"I fear Annina will return, or I would go with thee, at once."

"Is this cousin of thine still here, then?" asked the Bravo, with uneasiness.—"Thou knowest I would not be seen."

"Fear not. She cannot enter without touching that bell, for she is above with my poor bed-ridden mother. Thou canst go into the inner room, as usual, when she comes, and listen to her idle discourse, if thou wilt—or—but we have not time—for Annina comes seldom, and I know not why, but she seems to love a sick room little, as she never stays many minutes with her aunt."

"Thou would'st have said, or I might go on my errand, Gessina?"

"I would, Carlo—but I am certain we should be recalled by my impatient cousin."

"I can wait; I am patient when with thee, dearest Gessina."

"Hist!—'Tis my cousin's step.—Thou canst go in."

While she spoke, a small bell rang, and the Bravo withdrew into the inner room, like one accustomed to that place of retreat. He left the door ajar, for the darkness of the closet sufficiently concealed his person. In the meantime Gelsomina opened the outer door for the admission of her visitor. At the first sound of the latter's voice, Jacopo, who had little suspected the fact from a name which was so common, recognized the artful daughter of the wine-seller.

"Thou art at thy ease, here, Gelsomina," cried the latter, entering and throwing herself into a seat, like one fatigued. "Thy mother is better, and thou art truly mistress of the house."

"I would I were not, Annina, for I am young to have this trust, with this affliction."

"It is not so insupportable, Gessina, to be mistress within doors, at seventeen! Authority is sweet, and obedience is odious."

"I have found neither so, and I will give

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up the first with joy, whenever my poor mother shall be able to take command of her own family again."

"This is well, Gessina, and does credit to the good father confessor. But authority is dear to woman, and so is liberty. Thou wast not with the maskers yesterday, in the square?"

"I seldom wear a disguise, and I could not quit my mother."

"Which means that thou would'st have been glad to do it. Thou hast good reason for thy regrets, since a gayer marriage of the sea, or a braver regatta, has not been witnessed in Venice, since thou wast born. But the first was to be seen from thy window?"

"I saw the galley of state sweeping toward the Lido, and the train of patricians on its deck; but little else."

"No matter. Thou shalt have as good an idea of the pageant as if thou hadst played the part of the doge himself. First came the men of the guard with their ancient dresses——"

"Nay, this I remember to have often seen; for the same show is kept from year to year."

"Thou art right; but Venice never witnessed such a brave regatta! Thou knowest that the first trial is always between gondolas of many oars, steered by the best esteemed of the canals. Luigi was there, and though he did not win, he more than merited success, by the manner in which he directed his boat. Thou knowest Luigi?"

"I scarce know any in Venice, Annina, for the long illness of my mother, and this unhappy office of my father, keep me within, when others are on the canals."

"True. Thou art not well placed to make acquaintances. But Luigi is second to no gondolier, in skill or reputation, and he is much the merriest rogue of them all that put foot on the Lido."

"He was foremost, then, in the grand race?"

"He should have been, but the awkwardness of his fellows, and some unfairness in the crossing, threw him back to be second. 'Twas a sight to behold, that of many noble watermen struggling to maintain or to get a name on the canals. Santa Maria! I would thou could'st have seen it, girl!"

"I should not have been glad to see a friend defeated."

"We must take fortune as it offers. But the most wonderful sight of the day, after all, though Luigi and his fellows did so well, was to see a poor fisherman, named Antonio, in his bare head and naked legs, a man of seventy years, and with a boat no better than that I use to carry liquors to the Lido, entering on the second race, and carrying off the prize!"

"He could not have met with powerful rivals?"

"The best of Venice; though Luigi, having strived for the first, could not enter for the second trial. 'Tis said, too," continued Annina, looking about her with habitual caution, "that one, who may scarce be named in Venice, had the boldness to appear in that regatta masked; and yet the fisherman won! Thou hast heard of Jacopo?"

"The name is common."

"There is but one who bears it now, in Venice.—All mean the same when they say Jacopo."

"I have heard of a monster of that name. Surely he hath not dared to show himself among the nobles, on such a festa!"

"Gessina, we live in an unaccountable country! The man walks the piazza with a step as lordly as the doge, at his pleasure, and yet none say aught to him! I have seen him, at noonday, leaning against the triumphal mast, or the column of San Teodoro, with as proud an air as if he were put there to celebrate a victory of the republic!"

"Perhaps he is master of some terrible secret, which they fear he will reveal?"

"Thou knowest little of Venice, child! Holy Maria! a secret of that kind is a death-warrant of itself. It is as dangerous to know too much, as it is to know too little, when one deals with St. Mark. But they say Jacopo was there, standing eye to eye with the doge, and scaring the senators as if he had been an uncalled spectre from the vaults of their fathers. Nor is this all; as I crossed the Lagunes this morning, I saw the body of a young cavalier drawn from the water, and those who were near it said it had the mark of his fatal hand!"

The timid Gelsomina shuddered.

"They who rule," she said, "will have to

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answer for this negligence to God, if they let the wretch longer go at large."

"Blessed St. Mark protect his children! They say there is much of this sin to answer for—but see the body I did, with my own eyes, in entering the canals this morning."

"And didst thou sleep on the Lido, that thou wert abroad so early?"

"The Lido—yes—nay—I slept not, but thou knowest my father had a busy day during the revels, and I am not like thee, Gessina, mistress of the household, to do as I would. But I tarry here to chat with the, when there is great need of industry at home. Hast thou the package, child, which I trusted to thy keeping, at my last visit?"

"It is here," answered Gelsomina, opening a drawer, and handing to her cousin a small but closely enveloped package, which, unknown to herself, contained some articles of forbidden commerce, and which the other, in her indefatigable activity, had been obliged to secrete for a time. "I had begun to think that thou hadst forgotten it, and was about to send it to thee."

"Gelsomina, if thou lovest me, never do so rash an act! My brother Guiseppe—thou scarce knowest Guiseppe?"

"We have little acquaintance, for cousins."

"Thou art fortunate in thy ignorance. I cannot say what I might of the child of the the same parents, but had Guiseppe seen this package, by any accident, it might have brought thee into great trouble!"

"Nay, I fear not thy brother, nor any else," said the daughter of the prison-keeper, with the firmness of innocence; "he could do me no harm for dealing kindly by a relative."

"Thou art right; but he might have caused me great vexation. Sainted Maria! if thou knewest the pain that unthinking and misguided boy gives his family! He is my brother, after all, and you will fancy the rest. Addio, good Gessina; I hope thy father will permit thee to come and visit, at last, those who so much love thee."

"Addio, Annina; thou knowest I would come gladly, but that I scarce quit the side of my poor mother."

The wily daughter of the wine-seller gave her guileless and unsuspecting friend a kiss, and then she was let out and departed.

"Carlo," said the soft voice of Gessina; "thou canst come forth, for we have no further fear of visits."

The Bravo appeared, but with a paleness deeper than common on his cheek. He looked mournfully at the gentle and affectionate being who awaited his return, and when he struggled to answer her ingenuous smile, the abortive effort gave his features an expression of ghastliness.

"Annina has wearied thee with her idle discourse of the regatta, and of murders on the canals. Thou wilt not judge her harshly, for the manner in which she spoke of Guiseppe, who may deserve this, and more. But I know thy impatience, and I will not increase thy weariness."

"Hold, Gessina—this girl is thy cousin?"

"Have I not told thee so? our mothers are sisters."

"And she is here often?"

"Not as often as she could wish, I am certain, for her aunt has not quitted her room for many, many months."

"Thou art an excellent daughter, kind Gessina, and would make all others as virtuous as thyself.—And thou hast been to return these visits?"

"Never. My father forbids it, for they are dealers in wines, and entertain the gondoliers in revelry. But Annina is blameless for the trade of her parents."

"No doubt—and that package? it hath been long in thy keeping."

"A month; Annina left it at her last visit, for she was hurried to cross to the Lido. But why these questions? You do not like my cousin, who is giddy, and given to idle conversation, but who, I think, must have a good heart. Thou heard'st the manner in which she spoke of the wretched bravo, Jacopo, and of this late murder?"

"I did."

"Thou could'st not have shown more horror at the monster's crime thyself, Carlo. Nay, Annina is thoughtless, and she might be less worldly; but she hath, like all of us, a holy aversion to sin. Shall I lead thee to the cell?"

"Go on."

"Thy honest nature revolts, Carlo, at the cold villany of the assassin. I have heard much of his murders, and of the manner in which those up above bear with him. They

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say, in common, that his art surpasseth theirs, and that the officers wait for proof, that they may not do injustice."

"Is the senate so tender, think you?" asked the Bravo, huskily, but motioning for his companion to proceed.

The girl looked sad, like one who felt the force of this question; and she turned away to open a private door, whence she brought forth a little box.

"This is the key, Carlo," she said, showing him one of a massive bunch, "and I am now the sole warder. This much, at least, we have effected; the day may still come when we shall do more."

The Bravo endeavored to smile as if he appreciated her kindness; but he only succeded in making her understand his desire to go on. The eye of the gentle-hearted girl lost its gleam of hope in an expression of sorrow, and she obeyed.

CHAPTER XIX.

But let us to the roof,
And, when thou hast survey'd the sea, the land,
Visit the narrow cells that cluster there,
As in a place of tombs.—*St. Mark's Place.*

We shall not attempt to thread the vaulted galleries, the gloomy corridors, and all the apartments, through which the keeper's daughter led her companion. Those, who have ever entered an extensive prison, will require no description to revive the feeling of pain which it excited, by barred windows, creaking hinges, grating bolts, and all those other signs, which are alike the means and evidence of incarceration. The building, unhappily like most other edifices intended to repress the vices of society, was vast, strong, and intricate within, although, as has been already intimated, of a chaste and simple beauty externally, that might seem to have been adopted in mockery of its destination.

Gelsomina entered a low, narrow, and glazed gallery, when she stopped.

"Thou soughtest me, as wont, beneath the water-gate, Carlo," she asked, "at the usual hour?"

"I should not have entered the prison had I found thee there, for thou knowest I would be little seen. But I bethought me of thy mother, and crossed the canal."

"Thou wast wrong. My mother rests much as she has done, for many months—thou must have seen that we are not taking the usual route to the cell?"

"I have; but as we are not accustomed to meet in thy father's rooms, on this errand, I thought this the necessary direction."

"Hast thou much knowledge of the palace and the prison, Carlo?"

"More than I could wish, good Gelsomina;—but why am I thus questioned, at a moment when I would be otherwise employed?"

The timid and conscious girl did not answer. Her cheek was never bright, for like a flower reared in the shade, it had the delicate hue of her secluded life: but at this question it became pale. Accustomed to the ingenuous habits of the sensitive being at his side, the Bravo studied her speaking features intently. He moved swiftly to a window, and looking out, his eye fell upon a narrow and gloomy canal. Crossing the gallery, he cast a glance beneath him, and saw the same dark watery passage, leading between the masonry of two massive piles to the quay and the port.

"Gelsomina!" he cried, recoiling from the sight, "this is the Bridge of Sighs!"

"It is, Carlo; hast thou ever crossed it before?"

"Never; nor do I understand why I cross it now. I have long thought that it might one day be my fortune to walk this fatal passage, but I could not dream of such a keeper!"

The eye of Gelsomina brightened, and her smile was cheerful.

"Thou wilt never cross it to thy harm with me."

"Of that I am certain, kind Gessina," he answered, taking her hand. "But this is a riddle that I cannot explain. Art thou in the habit of entering the palace by this gallery?"

"It is little used, except by the keepers and the condemned, as doubtless thou hast often heard; but yet they have given me the keys, and taught me the windings of the place, in order that I might serve, as usual, for thy guide."

"Gelsomina, I fear I have been too happy

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in thy company to note, as prudence would have told me, the rare kindness of the council in permitting me to enjoy it!"

"Dost thou repent, Carlo, that thou hast known me?"

The reproachful melancholy of her voice touched the Bravo, who kissed the hand he held with Italian fervor.

"I should then repent me of the only hours of happiness I have known for years," he said. Thou hast been to me, Gelsomina, like a flower in a desert—a pure spring to a feverish man—a gleam of hope to one suffering under malediction.—No, no; not for a moment have I repented knowing thee, my Gelsomina!"

"'Twould not have made my life more happy, Carlo, to have thought I had added to thy sorrows. I am young, and ignorant of the world, but I know we should cause joy, and not pain, to those we esteem."

"Thy nature would teach thee this gentle lesson. But, is it not strange that one, like me, should be suffered to visit the prison unattended by any other keeper?"

"I had not thought it so, Carlo; but, surely, it is not common!"

"We have found so much pleasure in each other, dear Gessina, that we have overlooked what ought to have caused alarm."

"Alarm, Carlo!"

"Or, at least, distrust: for these wily senators do no act of mercy without a motive. But it is now too late to recall the past, if we would; and in that which relates to thee I would not lose the memory of a moment. Let us proceed."

The slight cloud vanished from the face of the mild auditor of the Bravo; but still she did not move.

"Few pass this bridge, they say," she added tremulously, "and enter the world again; and yet thou dost not even ask why we are here, Carlo!"

There was a transient gleam of distrust in the hasty glance of the Bravo. as he shot a look at the undisturbed eye of the innocent being who put this question. But it scarcely remained long enough to change the expression of manly interest she was accustomed to meet in his look.

"Since thou wilt have me curious," he said, "why hast thou come hither, and more than all, being here, why dost thou linger?"

"The season is advanced, Carlo," she answered, speaking scarcely above her breath, "and we should look in vain among the cells."

"I understand thee," he said; "we will proceed."

Gelsomina lingered to gaze wistfully into the face of her companion, but finding no visible sign of the agony he endured, she went on. Jacopa spoke hoarsely, but he was too long accustomed to disguise, to permit the weakness to escape, when he knew how much it would pain the sensitive and faithful being, who had yielded her affections to him, with a singleness and devotion which arose nearly as much from her manner of life as from natural ingenuousness.

In order that the reader may be enabled to understand the allusions, which seem to be so plain to our lovers, it may be necessary to explain another odious feature in the policy of the republic of Venice.

Whatever may be the pretension of a state, in its acknowledged theories, an unerring clew to its true character is ever to be found in the machinery of its practice. In those governments which are created for the good of the people, force is applied with caution and reluctance, since the protection and not the injury of the weak is their object; whereas the more selfish and exclusive the system becomes, the more severe and ruthless are the coercive means employed by those in power. Thus, in Venice, whose whole political fabric reposed on the narrow foundation of an oligarchy, the jealousy of the senate brought the engines of despotism in absolute contact with even the pageantry of their titular prince, and the palace of the Doge himself was polluted by the presence of the dungeons. The princely edifice had its summer and winter cells. The reader may be ready to believe that mercy had dictated some slight solace for the miserable in this arrangement. But this would be ascribing pity to a body, which, to its latest moment, had no tie to subject it to the weakness of humanity. So far from consulting the sufferings of the captive, his winter cell was below the level of the canals, while his summers were to be passed beneath the leads, exposed to the action of the burn-

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ing sun of that climate. As the reader has probably anticipated, already, that Jacopo was in the prison on an errand connected with some captive, this short explanation will enable him to understand the secret allusion of his companion. He they sought had, in truth, been recently conveyed from the damp cells, where he had passed the winter and spring, to the heated chambers beneath the roof.

Gelsomina continued to lead the way, with a sadness of eye and feature that betrayed her strong sympathy with the sufferings of her companion, but without appearing to think further delay necessary. She had communicated a circumstance, which weighed heavily on her own mind, and, like most of her mild temperament, who had dreaded such a duty, now that it was discharged, she experieneed a sensible relief. They ascended many flights of steps, opened and shut numberless doors, and threaded several narrow corridors in silence, before reaching the place of destination. While Gelsomina sought the key of the door, before which they stopped, in the large bunch she carried, the Bravo breathed the hor air of the attic like one who was suffocating.

"They promised me that this should not be done again!" he said.—"But they forget their pledges, fiends as they are!"

"Carlo!—thou forgettest that this is the palace of the Doge!" whispered the girl, while she threw a timid glance behind her.

"I forget nothing that is connected with the republic!—It is all here," striking his flushed brow—"what is not there is in my heart!"

"Poor Carlo! this cannot last forever—there will be an end."

"Thou art right," answered the Bravo, hoarsely.—"The end is nearer than thou thinkest.—No matter; turn the key that we may go in."

The hand of Gelsomina lingered on the lock, but, admonished by his impatient eye, she complied, and they entered the cell.

"Father!" exclaimed the Bravo, hastening to the side of a pallet that lay on the floor.

The attenuated and feeble form of an old man rose at the word, and an eye which, while it spoke mental feebleness, was at that moment even brighter than that of his son, glared on the faces of Gelsomina and her companion.

"Thou hast not suffered, as I had feared, by this sudden change, father!" continued the latter, kneeling by the side of the straw.—"Thine eye, and cheek, and countenance are better, than in the damp caves below!"

"I am happy here," returned the prisoner;—"there is light, and though they have given me too much of it, thou canst never know, my boy, the joy of looking at the day, after so long a night."

"He is better, Gelsomina!—They have not yet destroyed him. See!—his eye is bright even, and his cheek has a glow!"

"They are ever so, after passing the winter in the lower dungeons," whispered the gentle girl.

"Hast thou news for me, boy?—What tidings from thy mother?"

Jacopo bowed his head to conceal the anguish occasioned by this question, which he now heard for the hundredth time.

"She is happy, father—happy as one can be, who so well loves thee, when away from thy side."

"Does she speak of me often?"

"The last word that I heard from her lips, was thy name."

"Holy Maria, bless her! I trust she remembers me in her prayers?"

"Doubt it not, father,—they are the prayers of an angel!"

"And thy patient sister?—thou hast not named her, son."

"She, too, is well, father."

"Has she ceased to blame herself for being the innocent cause of my sufferings?"

"She has."

"Then she pines no longer over a blow that cannot be helped."

The Bravo seemed to search for relief in the sympathizing eyes of the pale and speechless Gelsomina.

"She has ceased to pine, father;" he uttered with compelled calmness.

"Thou hast ever loved thy sister, boy, with manly tenderness. Thy heart is kind, as I have reason to know. If God has given me grief, he has blessed me, in my children!"

A long pause followed, during which the parent seemed to muse on the past, while the child rejoiced in the suspension of questions

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which harrowed his soul, since those of whom the other spoke had long been the victims of family misfortune. The old man, for the prisoner was aged, as well as feeble, turned his look on the still kneeling Bravo, thoughtfully, and continued—

"There is little hope of thy sister marrying, for none are fond of tying themselves to the proscribed."

"She wishes it not—she wishes it not—she is happy, with my mother!"

"It is a happiness the republic will not begrudge: Is there no hope of our being able to meet soon?"

"Thou wilt meet my mother,—yes, that pleasure will come at last!"

"It is a weary time since any of my blood, but thee, have stood in my sight. Kneel, that I may bless thee."

Jacopo, who had arisen under his mental torture, obeyed, and bowed his head in reverence to receive the paternal benediction. The lips of the old man moved, and his eyes were turned to Heaven, but his language was of the heart, rather than that of the tongue. Gelsomina bent her head to her bosom, and seemed to unite her prayers to those of the prisoner. When the silent but solemn ceremony was ended, each made the customary sign of the cross, and Jacopo kissed the wrinkled hand of the captive.

"Hast thou hope for me?" the old man asked, this pious and grateful duty done. "Do they still promise to let me look upon the sun again?"

"They do.—They promise fair."

"Would that their words were true! I have lived on hope, for a weary time—I have now been within these walls more than four years, methinks."

Jacopo did not answer, for he knew that his father named the period only that he himself had been permitted to see him.

"I built upon the expectation, that the Doge would remember his ancient servant, and open my prison-doors."

Still Jacopo was silent, for the Doge, of whom the other spoke, had long been dead.

"And yet I should be grateful, for Maria and the saints have not forgotten me. I am not without my pleasures, in captivity."

"God be praised!" returned the Bravo.

"In what manner dost thou ease thy sorrows, father?"

"Look hither, boy," exclaimed the old man, whose eyes betrayed a mixture of feverish excitement caused by the recent change in his prison, and the growing imbecility of a mind that was gradually losing its powers for the want of use; "dost thou see the rent in that bit of wood? It opens with the heat, from time to time, and since I have been an inhabitant here, that fissure has doubled in length—I sometimes fancy, that when it reaches the knot, the hearts of the senators will soften, and that my doors will open. There is satisfaction, in watching its increase, as it lengthens, inch by inch, year after year!"

"Is this all?"

"Nay, I have other pleasures. There was a spider the past year, that wove his web from yonder beam, and he was a companion, too, that I loved to see; wilt thou look, boy, if there is hope of his coming back?"

"I see him not," whispered the Bravo.

"Well, there is always the hope of his return. The flies will enter soon, and then he will be looking for his prey. They may shut me up on a false charge, and keep me weary years from my wife and daughter, but they cannot rob me of all my happiness!"

The aged captive was mute and thoughtful. A childish impatience glowed in his eyes, and he gazed from the rent, the companion of so many solitary summers, to the face of his son, like one who began to distrust his enjoyments.

"Well, let them take it away," he said, burying his head beneath the covering of his bed; "I will not curse them!"

"Father!"

The prisoner made no reply.

"Father!"

"Jacopo!"

In his turn the Bravo was speechless. He did not venture, even, to steal a glance toward the breathless and attentive Gelsomina, though his bosom heaved with longing to examine her guileless features.

"Dost thou hear me, son?" continued the prisoner, uncovering his head: "dost thou really think they will have the heart to chase the spider from my cell?"

"They will leave thee this pleasure, father,

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for it touches neither their power nor their fame. So long as the senate can keep its foot on the neck of the people, and so long as it can keep the seemliness of a good name, it will not envy thee this."

"Blessed Maria, make me thankful!—I had my fears, child; for it is not pleasant to lose any friend in a cell!"

Jacopo then proceeded to soothe the mind of the prisoner, and he gradually led his thoughts to other subjects. He laid by the bedside a few articles of food, that he was allowed to bring with him, and again holding out the hope of eventual liberation, he proposed to take his leave.

"I will try to believe thee, son," said the old man, who had good reason to distrust assurances so often made. "I will do all I can to believe it. Thou wilt tell thy mother that I never cease to think of her, and to pray for her; and thou wilt bless thy sister, in the name of her poor imprisoned parent."

The Bravo bowed in acquiescence, glad of any means to escape speech. At a sign from the old man he again bent his knee, and received the parting benediction. After busying himself in arranging the scanty furniture of the cell, and in trying to open one or two small fissures, with a view to admit more light and air, he quitted the place.

Neither Gelsomina nor Jacopo spoke, as they returned by the intricate passages through which they had ascended to the attic, until they were again on the Bridge of Sighs. It was seldom that human foot trod this gallery, and the former, with female quickness, selected it as a place suited to their further conference.

"Dost thou find him changed?" she asked, lingering on the arch.

"Much."

"Thou speakest with a frightful meaning!"

"I have not taught my countenance to lie to thee, Gelsomina."

"But there is hope.—Thou told'st him there was hope, thyself."

"Blessed Maria forgive the fraud! I could not rob the little life he has, of its only comfort."

"Carlo!—Carlo!—Why art thou so calm? I have never heard thee speak so calmly of thy father's wrongs and imprisonment."

"It is because his liberation is near."

"But this moment he was without hope, and thou speakest, now, of liberation!"

"The liberation of death. Even the anger of the senate will respect the grave."

"Dost thou think his end near? I had not seen this change."

"Thou art kind, good Gelsomina, and true to thy friends, and without suspicion of those crimes of which thou art so innocent; but to one who has seen as much evil as I, a jealous thought comes at every new event. The sufferings of my poor father are near their end, for nature is worn out; but were it not, I can foresee that means would be found to bring them to a close."

"Thou canst not suspect that any one here would do him harm?"

"I suspect none that belong to thee. Both thy father and thyself, Gelsomina, are placed here by the interposition of the saints, that the fiends should not have too much power on earth."

"I do not understand thee, Carlo—but thou art often so.—Thy father used a word to-day that I could wish he had not, in speaking to thee."

The eye of the Bravo threw a quick, uneasy, suspicious glance at his companion, and then averted its look with haste.

"He called thee, Jacopo!" continued the girl.

"Men often have glimpses of their fate by the kindness of their patrons."

"Would'st thou say, Carlo, that thy father suspects the senate will employ the monster he named?"

"Why not?—they have employed worse men. If report says true, he is not unknown to them."

"Can this be so!—Thou art bitter against the republic, because it has done injury to thy family; but thou canst not believe it has ever dealt with the hired stiletto."

"I said no more than is whispered daily on the canals."

"I would thy father had not called thee by this terrible name, Carlo!"

"Thou art too wise to be moved by a word, Gelsomina. But what thinkest thou of my unhappy father?"

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"This visit has not been like the others thou hast made him in my company. I know not the reason, but to me thou hast ever seemed to feel the hope with which thou hast cheered the prisoner; while now, thou seemest to have even a frightful pleasure in despair."

"Thy fears deceive thee," returned the Bravo, scarce speaking above his breath. "Thy fears deceive thee, and we will say no more. The senate mean to do us justice at last. They are honorable signori, of illustrious birth, and renowned names!—'Twould be madness to distrust the patricians! Dost thou not know, girl, that he who is born of gentle blood is above the weaknesses and temptations that beset us of base origin? They are men placed by birth above the weaknesses of mortals, and owing their account to none, they will be sure to do justice. This is reasonable, and who can doubt it!"

As he ended, the Bravo laughed bitterly.

"Nay, now thou triflest with me Carlo; none are above the danger of doing wrong, but those whom the saints and kind Maria favor."

"This comes of living in a prison, and of saying thy prayers night and morning! No —no—silly girl, there are men in the world born wise, from generation to generation; born honest, virtuous, brave, incorruptible, and fit in all things to shut up and imprison those who are born base and ignoble. Where hast thou passed thy days, foolish Gelsomina, not to have felt this truth, in the very air thou breathest? 'Tis clear as the sun's light, and palpable—ay—palpable as these prison walls!"

The timid girl recoiled from his side, and there was a moment when she meditated flight; for never before, during their numberless and confidential interviews, had she ever heard so bitter a laugh, or seen so wild a gleam in the eye of her companion.

"I could almost fancy, Carlo, that thy father was right in using the name he did;" she said, as recovering herself, she turned a reproachful look on his still excited features.

"It it the business of parents to name their children;—but, enough. I must leave thee, good Gelsomina, and I leave thee with a heavy heart."

The unsuspecting Gelsomina forgot her alarm. She knew not why, but, though the imaginary Carlo seldom quitted her that she was not sad, she felt a weight heavier than common on her spirits at this declaration.

"Thou hast thy affairs, and they must not be forgotten. Art fortunate with the gondola of late, Carlo?"

"Gold and I are nearly strangers. The republic throws the whole charge of the venerable prisoner on my toil."

"I have little, as thou knowest, Carlo," said Gelsomina, in a half-audible voice; "but it is thine. My father is not rich, as thou canst feel, or he would not live on the sufferings of others, by holding the keys of the prison."

"He is better employed than those who set the duty. Were the choice given me, girl, to wear the horned bonnet, to feast in their halls, to rest in their palaces, to be the gayest bawble in such a pageant as that of yesterday, to plot in their secret councils, and to be the heartless judge to condemn my fellows to this misery—or to be merely the keeper of the keys and turner of the bolts—I should seize on the latter office, as not only the most innocent, but by far the most honorable!"

"Thou dost not judge as the world judges, Carlo. I had feared thou might'st feel shame at being the husband of a jailer's daughter; nay, I will not hide the secret longer, since thou speakest so calmly, I have wept that it should be so."

"Then thou hast neither understood the world nor me. Were thy father of the senate, or of the Council of Three, could the grievous fact be known, thou would'st have cause to sorrow. But Gelsomina, the canals are getting dusky, and I must leave thee."

The reluctant girl saw the truth of what he said, and applying a key, she opened the door of the covered bridge. A few turnings and a short descent brought the Bravo and his companion to the level of the quays. Here the former took a hurried leave and quitted the prison.

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CHAPTER XX.

·But they who blunder thus are raw beginners.
—*Don Juan.*

THE hour had come for the revels of the Piazza, and for the movement of the gondolas. Maskers glided along the porticos as usual; the song and cry were heard anew, and Venice was again absorbed in delusive gayety.

When Jacopo issued from the prison on the quay, he mingled with the stream of human beings that were setting towards the squares, protected from observation by the privileged mask. While crossing the lower bridge of the canal of St. Mark, he lingered an instant, to throw a look at the glazed gallery he had just quitted, and then moved forward with the crowd—the image of the artless and confiding Gelsomina uppermost in his thoughts. As he passed slowly along the gloomy arches of the Broglio, his eyes sought the person of Don Camillo Monforte. They met at the angle of the little square, and exchanging secret signs, the Bravo moved on unnoticed.

Hundreds of boats lay at the foot of the Piazzetta. Among these Jacopo sought his own gondola, which he extricated from the floating mass, and urged into the stream. A few sweeps of the oar, and he lay at the side of La Bella Sorrentina. The padrone paced the deck, enjoying the cool of the evening, with Italian indolence, while his people sang, or rather chanted, a song of those seas, grouped on the forecastle. The greetings were blunt and brief, as is usual among men of that class. But the padrone appeared to expect a visit, for he led his guest far from the ears of his crew, to the other extremity of the felucca.

"Hast thou aught in particular, good Roderigo?" demanded the mariner, who knew the Bravo by a sign, and yet who only knew him by that fictitious name. "Thou seest we have not passed the time idly, though yesterday was a festa."

"Art thou ready for the gulf?"

"For the Levant, or the Pillars of Hercules, as shall please the senate. We have got our yard aloft since the sun went behind the mountains, and though we may seem careless of delay, an hour's notice will fit us for the outside of the Lido."

"Then take the notice."

"Master Roderigo, you bring your news to an overstocked market. I have already been informed that we shall be wanted to-night."

The quick movement of suspicion made by the Bravo escaped the observation of the padrone, whose eye was running over the felucca's gear, with a sailor's habitual attention to that part of his vessel, when there was question of its service.

"Thou art right, Stefano. But there is little harm in repeated caution. Preparation is the first duty in a delicate commission."

"Will you look for yourself, Signor Roderigo?" said the mariner, in a lower tone. "La Bella Sorrentina is not the Bucentaur, nor a galley of the Grand Master of Malta; but, for her size, better rooms are not to be had in the palace of the Doge. When they told me there was a lady in the freight, the honor of Calabria was stirred in her behalf."

"'Tis well. If they have named to thee all the particulars, thou wilt not fail to do thyself credit."

"I do not say that they have shown me half of them, good signor," interrupted Stefano. "The secrecy of your Venetian shipments is my greatest objection to the trade. It has more than once happened to me, that I have lain weeks in the canals, with my hold as clean as a friar's conscience, when orders have come to weigh, with some such cargo as a messenger, who has got into his berth as we cleared the port, to get out of it on the coast of Dalmatia, or among the Greek islands."

"In such cases thou hast earned thy money easily."

"Diamine! Master Roderigo, if I had a friend in Venice to give timely advice, the felucca might be ballasted with articles that would bring a profit on the other shore. Of what concern is it to the senate, when I do my duty to the nobles faithfully, that I do my duty at the same time to the good woman and her little brown children, left at home in Calabria?"

"There is much reason in what thou sayest, Stefano; but thou knowest the republic is a hard master. An affair of this nature must be touched with a gentle hand."

"None know it better than I, for when they sent the trader with all of his movables

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out of the city, I was obliged to throw certain casks into the sea to make room for his worthless stuffs. The senate owes me just compensation for that loss, worthy Signor Roderigo?"

"Which thou would'st be glad to repair to-night?"

"Santissima Maria! You may be the Doge himself, signor, for anything I know of your countenance; but I could swear at the altar you ought to be of the senate for your sagacity!—If this lady will not be burdened with many effects, and there is yet time, I might humor the tastes of the Dalmatians with certain of the articles that come from the countries beyond the Pillars of Hercules!"

"Thou art the judge of the probability thyself, since they told thee of the nature of thy errand."

"San Gennaro of Napoli, open my eyes! —They said not a word beyond this little fact that a youthful lady, in whom the senate had great interest, would quit the city this night for the eastern coast.—If it is at all agreeable to your conscience, Master Roderigo, I should be happy to hear who are to be her companions?"

"Of that thou shalt hear more in proper season. In the meantime I would recommend to thee a cautious tongue, for St. Mark makes no idle jokes with those who offend him. I am glad to see thee in this state of preparation, worthy padrone, and wishing thee a happy night, and a prosperous voyage, I commit thee to thy patron. But hold—ere I quit thee, I would know the hour that the land-breeze will serve?"

"You are as exact as a compass in your own matters, signor, but of little charity to thy friends! With the burning sun of to-day we should have the air of the Alps about the turn of the night."

"'Tis well.—My eye shall be on thee. Once more, addio."

"Cospetto! and thou hast said nothing of the cargo?"

"'Twill not be so weighty in bulk as in value," carelessly answered Jacopo, shoving his gondola from the side of the felucca. The fall of his oar into the water succeeded, and as Stefano stood, meditating the chances of his speculation on his deck, the boat glided away towards the quay with a swift but easy movement.

Deceit, like the windings of that subtle animal the fox, often crosses its own path. It consequently throws out those by whom it is practised, as well as those who are meant to be its victims. When Jacopo parted from Don Camillo, it was with an understanding that he should adopt all the means that his native sagacity or his experience might suggest, to ascertain in what manner the council intended to dispose of the person of Donna Violetta. They had separated on the Lido, and as none knew of their interview but him, and none would probably suspect their recent alliance, the Bravo entered on his new duty with some chances of success, that might otherwise have been lost. A change of its agents, in affairs of peculiar delicacy, was one of the ordinary means taken by the republic to avoid investigation. Jacopo had often been its instrument in negotiating with the mariner, who, as has been so plainly intimated, had frequently been engaged in carrying into effect its secret, and perhaps justifiable measures of police; but in no instance had it ever been found necessary to interpose a second agent between the commencement and consummation of its bargains, except in this. He had been ordered to see the padrone and to keep him in preparation for immediate service; but since the examination of Antonio before the council, his employers had neglected to give him any farther instructions. The danger of leaving the bride within reach of the agents of Don Camillo was so obvious, that this unusual caution had been considered necessary. It was under this disadvantage, therefore, that Jacopo entered on the discharge of his new and important duties.

That cunning, as has just been observed, is apt to overreach itself, has passed into a proverb; and the case of Jacopo and his employers was one in point to prove its truth. The unusual silence of those who ordinarily sought him on similar occasions, had not been lost on the agent; and the sight of the felucca, as he strayed along the quays, gave an accidental direction to his inquiries. The manner in which they were aided, by the cupidity of the Calabrian, has just been related.

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Jacopo had no sooner touched the quay and secured his boat, than he hastened again to the Broglio. It was now filled by maskers and the idlers of the Piazzetta. The patricians had withdrawn to the scenes of their own pleasures, or, in furtherance of that system of mysterious sway which it was their policy to maintain, they did not choose to remain exposed to the common eye, during the hours of license which were about to follow.

It would seem that Jacopo had his instructions, for no sooner did he make sure that Don Camillo had retired, than he threaded the throng with the air of a man whose course was decided. By this time, both the squares were full, and at least half of those who spent the night in those places of amusement, were masked. The step of the Bravo, though so unhesitating, was leisurely, and he found time, in passing up the Piazzetta, to examine the forms, and when circumstances permitted, the features of all he met. He proceeded, in this manner, to the point of junction between the two squares, when his elbow was touched by a light hand.

Jacopo was not accustomed, unnecessarily, to trust his voice in the square of St. Mark, and at that hour. But his look of inquiry was returned by a sign to follow. He had been stopped by one whose figure was so completely concealed by a domino, as to baffle all conjecture concerning his true character. Perceiving, however, that the other wished to lead him to a part of the square that was vacant, and which was directly on the course he was about to pursue, the Bravo made a gesture of compliance and followed. No sooner were the two apart from the pressure of the crowd, and in a place where no eavesdropper could overhear their discourse without detection, than the stranger stopped. He appeared to evamine the person, stature, and dress of Jacopo, from beneath his mask, with singular caution, closing the whole with a sign that meant recognition. Jacopo returned his dumb-show, but maintained a rigid silence.

"Just Daniel!" muttered the stranger, when he found that his companion was not disposed to speak, "one would think, illustrious signor, that your confessor had imposed a penance of silence, by the manner in which you refuse to speak to your servant."

"What would'st thou?"

"Here am I sent into the Piazza, among knights of industry, valets, gondoliers, and all other manner of revellers that adorn this Christian land, in search of the heir of one of the most ancient and honorable houses of Venice."

"How knowest thou I am he thou seekest?"

"Signor, there are many signs seen by a wise man, that escape the unobservant. When young cavaliers have a taste for mingling with the people in honorable disguise, as in the case of a certain patrician of this republic, they are to be known by their air, if not by their voices."

"Thou art a cunning agent, Hosea; but the shrewdness of thy race is its livelihood!"

"It is its sole defence against the wrongs of the oppressor, young noble. We are hunted like wolves, and it is not surprising that we sometimes show the ferocity of the beasts you take us for. But why should I tell the wrongs of my people to one who believes life is a masquerade?"

"And who would not be sorry, ingenious Hosea, were it composed only of Hebrews! But, thy errand; I have no gage unredeemed, nor do I know that I owe thee gold."

"Righteous Samuel! your cavaliers of the senate are not always mindful of the past, signor, or these are words that might have been spared. If your eccellenza is inclined to forget pledges, the fault is not of my seeking; but as for the account that has been so long growing between us, there is not a dealer on the Rialto that will dispute the proofs."

"Well, be it so—would'st thou dun my father's son in the face of the revellers in St. Mark?"

"I would do no discredit to any come of that illustrious race, signor, and therefore we will say no more of the matter; always relying that, at the proper moment, you will not question your own hand and seal."

"I like thy prudence, Hebrew. It is a pledge thou comest on some errand less ungracious than common. As I am pressed for time, 'twill be a favor wert thou to name it."

Hosea examined, in a covert but very

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thorough manner, the vacant spot around them, and drawing nearer to the supposed noble, he continued:

"Signor, your family is in danger of meeting with a great loss! It is known to you that the senate has altogether and suddenly removed Donna Violetta from the keeping of the faithful and illustrious senator your father."

Though Jacopo started slightly, the movement was so natural for a disappointed lover, that it rather aided than endangered his disguise.

"Compose yourself, young signor," continued Hosea; "these disappointments attend us all in youth, as I know by severe trials. Leah was not gained without trouble, and next to success in barter, success in love is perhaps the most uncertain. Gold is a great make-weight in both, and it commonly prevails. But, you are nearer to losing the lady of your love and her possessions, than you may imagine, for I am sent expressly to say that she is about to be removed from the city."

"Whither?" demanded Jacopo, so quickly as to do credit to his assumed character.

"That is the point to learn, signor. Thy father is a sagacious senator, and is deep, at times, in the secrets of the state. But, judging from his uncertainty on this occasion, I take it he is guided more by his calculations than by any assurance of his own knowledge. Just Daniel! I have seen the moments when I have suspected that the venerable patrician himself was a member of the Council of Three!"

"His house is ancient and his privileges well established—why should he not?"

"I say naught against it, signor. It is a wise body, that doeth much good, and preventeth much harm. None speak evil of the secret councils on the Rialto, where men are more given to gainful industry than to wild discussions of their rulers' acts. But, signor, be he of this or that council, or merely of the senate, a heedful hint has fallen from his lips of the danger we are in of losing——"

"We!—Hast thou thoughts of Donna Violetta, Hosea?"

"Leah and the law forbid!—If the comely queen of Sheba, herself, were to tempt me, and a frail nature showed signs of weakness, I doubt that our rabbis would find reasons for teaching self-denial! Besides, the daughter of Levi is no favorer of polygamy, nor any other of our sex's privileges. I spoke in pluralities, signor, because the Rialto has some stake in this marriage, as well as the house of Gradenigo."

"I understand thee. Thou hast fears for thy gold?"

"Had I been easily alarmed, Signor Giacomo, in that particular, I might not have parted with it so readily. But, though the succession of thy illustrious father will be ample to meet any loan within my humble means, that of the late Signor Tiepolo will not weaken the security."

"I admit thy sagacity, and feel the importance of thy warning. But it seems to have no other object or warranty, than thy own fears."

"With certain obscure hints from your honored father, signor."

"Did he say more to the point?"

"He spoke in parables, young noble, but having an oriental ear, his words were not uttered to the wind. That the rich damsel is about to be conveyed from Venice am I certain, and for the benefit of the little stake I have myself in her movements, I would give the best turquoise in my shop to know whither."

"Canst thou say with certainty, 'twill be this night?"

"Giving no pledge for redemption in the event of mistake, I am so sure, young cavalier, as to have many unquiet thoughts."

"Enough—I will look to my own interests, and to thine."

Jacopo waved his hand in adieu, and pursued his walk up the Piazza.

"Had I looked more sharply to the latter, as became one accustomed to deal with the accursed race," muttered the Hebrew, "it would be a matter of no concern to me if the girl married a Turk!"

"Hosea," said a mask at his ear; "a word with thee, in secret."

The jeweller started, and found that, in his zeal, he had suffered one to approach within sound of his voice unseen. The other was in a domino also, and so well enveloped as to be effectually concealed.

"What would'st thou, Signor Mask?" demanded the wary Jew.

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"A word in friendship and in confidence.—Thou hast moneys to lend at usury?"

"The question had better be put to the republic's treasury! I have many stones, valued much below their weight, and would be glad to put them with some one more lucky than myself, who will be able to keep them."

"Nay, this will not suffice—thou art known to be abounding in sequins; one of thy race and riches will never refuse a sure loan, with securities as certain as the laws of Venice. A thousand ducats in thy willing hand is no novelty."

"They who call me rich, Signor Mask, are pleased to joke with the unhappy child of a luckless race. That I might have been above want—nay, that I am not downright needy, may be true; but when they speak of a thousand ducats, they speak of affairs too weighty for my burdened shoulders. Were it your pleasure to purchase an amethyst, or a ruby, gallant signior, there might possibly be dealings between us."

"I have need of gold, old man, and can spare thee jewels myself, at need. My wants are urgent, at this moment, and I have little time to lose in words—name thy conditions."

"One should have good securities, signor, to be so peremptory in a matter of money."

"Thou hast heard that the laws of Venice are not more certain. A thousand sequins, and that quickly. Thou shalt settle the usury with thine own conscience."

Hosea thought that this was giving ample room to the treaty, and he began to listen more seriously.

"Signor," he said, "a thousand ducats are not picked up at pleasure, from the pavement of the great square. He who would lend them, must first earn them with long and patient toil; and he who would borrow——"

"Waits at thy elbow."

"Should have a name and countenance well known on the Rialto."

"Thou lendest on sufficient pledges to masks, careful Hosea, or fame belies thy generosity."

"A sufficient pledge gives me power to see the way clearly though the borrower should be as much hidden as those up above. But here is none forthcoming. Come to me to-morrow, masked or not, as may suit your own pleasure, for I have no impertinent desire to pry into any man's secrets, beyond what a regard to my own interests requires, and I will look into my coffers; though those of no heir-apparent in Venice can be emptier."

"My necessities are too urgent to brook delay. Hast thou the gold, on condition of naming thine own usury?"

"With sufficient pledges in stones of price, I might rake together the sum among our dispersed people, signor. But he who goes on the island to borrow, as I shall be obliged to do, should be able to satisfy all doubts concerning the payment."

"The gold can then be had—on that point I may be easy?"

Hosea hesitated, for he had in vain endeavored to penetrate the other's disguise, and while he thought his assurance a favorable omen, with a lender's instinct he disliked his impatience.

"I have said, by the friendly aid of our people;" he answered, with caution.

"This uncertainty will not answer my need. Addio, Hosea,—I must seek elsewhere."

"Signor, you could not be more hurried were the money to pay the cost of your nuptials. Could I find Isaac and Aaron within, at this late hour, I think I might be safe in saying that part of the money might be had."

"I cannot trust to this chance."

"Nay, signor, the chance is but small, since Aaron is bedridden, and Isaac never fails to look into his affairs, after the toil of the day is ended. The honest Hebrew finds sufficient recreation in the employment, though I marvel at his satisfaction, since nothing but losses have come over our people the year past!"

"I tell thee, Jew, no doubt must hang over the negotiation. The money, with pledges, and thine own conscience for arbiter between us; but no equivocal dealings, to be followed by a disappointment, under the pretence that second parties are not satisfied."

"Just Daniel! to oblige you, signor, I think I may venture!—The well-known Hebrew, Levi of Livorno, has left with me a sack, containing the very sum of which there is ques-

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tion, and, under the conditions named, I will convert it to my uses, and repay the good jeweller his gold, with moneys of my own, at a later day."

"I thank thee for the fact, Hosea;" said the other, partially removing his mask, but as instantly replacing it. "It will greatly shorten our negotiations. Thou hast not that sack of the Jew of Livorno beneath thy domino?"

Hosea was speechless. The removal of the mask had taught him two material facts. He had been communicating his distrust of the senate's intentions, concerning Donna Violetta, to an unknown person, and, possibly, to an agent of the police; and he had just deprived himself of the only argument he had ever found available, in refusing the attempts of Giacomo Gradenigo to borrow, by admitting to that very individual, that he had in his power the precise sum required.

"I trust the face of an old customer is not likely to defeat our bargain, Hosea?" demanded the profligate heir of the senator, scarce concealing the irony in which the question was put.

"Father Abraham! Had I known it had been you, Signor Giacomo, we might have greatly shortened the treaty."

"By denying that thou hadst the money, as thou hast so often done of late!"

"Nay, nay, I am not a swallower of my own words, young signor; but my duty to Levi must not be forgotten. The careful Hebrew made me take a vow, by the name of our tribe, that I would not part with his gold to any that had not the means of placing its return beyond all chances."

"This assurance is not wanting, since thou art the borrower, thyself, to lend to me."

"Signor, you place my conscience in an awkward position. You are now my debtor some six thousand sequins, and were I to make this loan of money in trust, and were you to return it—two propositions I make on supposition—a natural love for my own might cause me to pass the payment to account, whereby I should put the assets of Levi in jeopardy."

"Settle that as thou wilt with thy conscience, Hosea—thou hast confessed to the money, and here are jewels for the pledge—I ask only the sequins."

It is probable that the appeal of Giacomo Gradenigo would not have produced much effect on the flinty nature of the Hebrew, who had all the failings of a man proscribed by opinion; but having recovered from his surprise, he began to explain to his companion his apprehensions on account of Donna Violetta, whose marriage, it will be remembered, was a secret to all but the witnesses and the Council of Three, when to his great joy he found that the gold was wanting to advance his own design of removing her to some secret place. This immediately changed the whole face of the bargain. As the pledges offered were really worth the sum to be received, Hosea thought, taking the chances of recovering back his ancient loans, from the foreign estates of the heiress, into the account, the loan would be no bad investment of the pretended sequins of his friend Levi.

As soon as the parties had come to a clear understanding, they left the square together, to consummate their bargain.

CHAPTER XXI.

We'll follow Cade, we'll follow Cade.—*Henry VI.*

THE night wore on. The strains of music again began to break through the ordinary stillness of the town, and the boats of the great were once more in motion on every canal. Hands waved timidly in recognition, from the windows of the little dark canopies, as the gondolas glided by, but few paused to greet each other in that city of mystery and suspicion. Even the refreshing air of the evening was inhaled under an appearance of restraint, which, though it might not be at the moment felt, was too much interwoven with the habits of the people ever to be entirely thrown aside.

Among the lighter and gayer barges of the patricians, a gondola of more than usual size, but of an exterior so plain as to denote vulgar uses, came sweeping down the great canal. Its movement was leisurely, and the action of the gondoliers that of men either fatigued or little pressed for time. He who steered, guided the boat with consummate skill, but with a single hand, while his three fellows, from time to time, suffered their oars to trail on the water in very idleness. In

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short, it had the ordinary listless appearance of a boat returning to the city from an excursion on the Brenta, or to some of the more distant isles.

Suddenly, the gondola diverged from the centre of the passage, down which it rather floated than pulled, and shot into one of the least frequented canals of the city. From this moment its movement became more rapid and regular, until it reached a quarter of the town inhabited by the lowest order of Venetians. Here it stopped by the side of a warehouse, and one of its crew ascended to a bridge. The others threw themselves on the thwarts and seemed to repose.

He who quitted the boat threaded a few narrow but public alleys, such as are to be found in every part of that confined town, and knocked lightly at a window. It was not long before the casement opened, and a female voice demanded the name of him without.

"It is I, Annina," returned Gino, who was not an unfrequent applicant for admission at that private portal. "Open the door, girl, for I have come on a matter of pressing haste."

Annina complied, though not without making sure that her suitor was alone.

"Thou art come unseasonably, Gino," said the wine-seller's daughter; "I was about to go to St. Mark's to breathe the evening air. My father and brothers are already departed, and I only stay to make sure of the bolts."

"Their gondola will hold a fourth?"

"They have gone by the footways."

"And thou walkest the streets alone at this hour, Annina?"

"I know not thy right to question it, if I do," returned the girl, with spirit. "San Teodoro be praised, I am not yet the slave of a Neapolitan's servitor!"

"The Neapolitan is a powerful noble, Annina, able and willing to keep his servitors in respect."

"He will have need of all his interest—but why hast thou come at this unseasonable hour? Thy visits are never too welcome, Gino, and when I have other affairs, they are disagreeable."

Had the passion of the gondolier been very deep or very sensitive, this plain dealing might have given him a shock; but Gino appeared to take the repulse as coolly as it was given.

"I am used to thy caprices, Annina," he said, throwing himself upon a bench, like one determined to remain where he was. "Some young patrician has kissed his hand to thee as thou hast crossed San Marco, or thy father has made a better day of it than common on the Lido—thy pride always mounts with thy father's purse."

"Diamine! to hear the fellow, one would think he had my troth, and that he only waited in the sacristy for the candles to be lighted, to receive my vows! What art thou to me, Gino Tullini, that thou takest on thee these sudden airs?"

"And what art thou to me, Annina, that thou playest off these worn-out caprices on Don Camillo's confidant?"

"Out upon thee, insolent! I have no time to waste in idleness."

"Thou art in much haste to-night, Annina."

"To be rid of thee. Now listen to what I say, Gino, and let every word go to thy heart, for they are the last thou wilt ever hear from me. Thou servest a decayed noble, one who will shortly be chased in disgrace from the city, and with him will go all his idle servitors. I choose to remain in the city of my birth."

The gondolier laughed in real indifference at her affected scorn. But remembering his errand, he quickly assumed a graver air, and endeavored to still the resentment of his fickle mistress by a more respectful manner.

"St. Mark protect me, Annina!" he said. "If we are not to kneel before the good priore together, it is no reason we should not bargain in wines. Here have I come into the dark canals, within stone's-throw of thy very door, with a gondola of mellow lachryma Christi, such as honest Maso, thy father, has rarely dealt in, and thou treatest me as a dog, that is chased from a church!"

"I have little time for thee or thy wines, to-night, Gino. Hadst thou not stayed me, I should already have been abroad and happy."

"Close thy door, girl, and make little ceremony with an old friend," said the gondolier, officiously offering to aid her in secur-

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ing the dwelling. Annina took him at his word, and as both appeared to work with good-will, the house was locked, and the wilful girl and her suitor were soon in the street. Their route lay across the bridge already named. Gino pointed to the gondola, as he said, "Thou art not to be tempted, Annina?"

"Thy rashness in leading the smugglers to my father's door will bring us to harm some day, silly fellow!"

"The boldness of the act will prevent suspicion."

"Of what vineyard is the liquor?"

"It came from the foot of Vesuvius, and is ripened by the heat of the volcano. Should my friends part with it to thy enemy, old Beppo, thy father will rue the hour!"

Annina, who was much addicted to consulting her interests on all occasions, cast a longing glance at the boat. The canopy was closed, but it was large, and her willing imagination readily induced her to fancy it well filled with skins from Naples.

"This will be the last of thy visits to our door, Gino?"

"As thou shalt please.—But go down and taste——"

Annina hesitated, and, as a woman is said always to do when she hesitates, she complied. They reached the boat with quick steps, and without regarding the men who were still lounging on the thwarts, Annina glided immediately beneath the canopy. A fifth gondolier was lying at length on the cushions, for, unlike a boat devoted to the contraband, the canopy had the usual arrangement of a bark of the canals.

"I see nothing to turn me aside!" exclaimed the disappointed girl. "Wilt thou aught with me, signor?"

"Thou art welcome. We shall not part so readily as before."

The stranger had arisen while speaking, and as he ended, he laid a hand on the shoulder of his visitor, who found herself confronted with Don Camillo Monforte.

Annina was too much practised in deception to indulge in any of the ordinary female symptoms, either of real or affected alarm. Commanding her features, though in truth her limbs shook, she said, with assumed pleasantry—

"The secret trade is honored in the services of the noble Duke of St. Agata!"

"I am not here to trifle, girl, as thou wilt see in the end. Thou hast thy choice before thee, frank confession, or my just anger."

Don Camillo spoke calmly, but in a manner that plainly showed Annina she had to deal with a resolute man.

"What confession would your eccellenza have from the daughter of a poor wine-seller?" she asked, her voice trembling in spite of herself.

"The truth—and remember, that this time we do not part until I am satisfied. The Venetian police and I are now fairly at issue, and thou art the first-fruits of my plan."

"Signor Duca, this is a bold step to take in the heart of the canals!"

"The consequences be mine. Thy interest will teach thee to confess."

"I shall make no great merit, signor, of doing that which is forced upon me. As it is your pleasure to know the little I can tell you, I am happy to be permitted to relate it."

"Speak, then; for time presses."

"Signor, I shall not pretend to deny you have been ill-treated. Capperi! how ill has the council treated you! A noble cavalier, of a strange country, who, the meanest gossip in Venice knows, has a just right to the honors of the senate, to be so treated is a disgrace to the republic! I do not wonder that your eccellenza is out of humor with them. Blessed St. Mark himself would lose his patience to be thus treated!"

"A truce with this, girl, and to your facts."

"My facts, Signor Duca, are a thousand times clearer than the sun, and they are all at your eccellenza's service. I am sure I wish I had more of them, since they give you pleasure."

"Enough of this profession.—Speak to the facts themselves."

Annina, who, in the manner of most of her class, in Italy, that had been exposed to the intrigues of the towns, had been lavish of her words, now found means to cast a glance at the water, when she saw that the boat had already quitted the canals, and was rowing easily out upon the Lagunes. Perceiving how completely she was in the power

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of Don Camillo, she began to feel the necessity of being more explicit.

"Your eccellenza has probably suspected that the council found means to be acquainted with your intention to fly from the city with Donna Violetta?"

"All that is known to me."

"Why they chose me to be the servitor of the noble lady is beyond my powers to discover. Our Lady of Loretto! I am not the person to be sent for, when the state wishes to part two lovers!"

"I have borne with thee, Annina, because I would let the gondola get beyond the limits of the city; but now thou must throw aside thy subterfuge, and speak plainly. Where didst thou leave my wife?"

"Does your eccellenza then think the state will admit the marriage to be legal?"

"Girl, answer, or I will find means to make thee. Where didst thou leave my wife?"

"Blessed St. Teodoro! Signor, the agents of the republic had little need of me, and I was put on the first bridge that the gondola passed."

"Thou strivest to deceive me in vain. Thou wast on the Lagunes till a late hour in the day, and I have notice of thy having visited the prison of St. Mark as the sun was setting; and this on thy return from the boat of Donna Violetta."

There was no acting in the wonder of Annina.

"Santissima Maria! You are better served, signor, than the council thinks!"

"As thou wilt find to thy cost, unless the truth be spoken. From what convent didst thou come?"

"Signor, from none. If your eccellenza has discovered that the senate has shut up the Signora Tiepolo in the prison of St. Mark, for safe-keeping, it is no fault of mine."

"Thy artifice is useless, Annina," observed Don Camillo, calmly. "Thou wast in the prison, in quest of forbidden articles that thou hadst long left with thy cousin Gelsomina, the keeper's daughter, who little suspected thy errand, and on whose innocence and ignorance of the world thou hast long successfully practised. Donna Violetta is no vulgar prisoner, to be immured in a jail."

"Santissima Madre di Dio!"

Amazement confined the answer of the girl to this single, but strong, exclamation.

"Thou seest the impossibility of deception. I am acquainted with so much of thy movements as to render it impossible that thou should'st lead me far astray. Thou art not wont to visit thy cousin; but as thou entered'st the canals this evening——"

A shout on the water caused Don Camillo to pause. On looking out he saw a dense body of boats, sweeping toward the town as if they were all impelled by a single set of oars. A thousand voices were speaking at once, and occasionally a general and doleful cry proclaimed that the floating multitude which came on was moved by a common feeling. The singularity of the spectacle, and the fact that his own gondola lay directly in the route of the fleet, which was composed of several hundred boats, drove the examination of the girl momentarily from the thoughts of the noble.

"What have we here, Jacopo?" he demanded, in an undertone, of the gondolier who steered his own barge.

"They are fishermen, signor, and by the manner in which they come down toward the canals, I doubt they are bent on some disturbance. There has been discontent among them since the refusal of the Doge to liberate the boy of their companion from the galleys."

Curiosity induced the people of Don Camillo to linger a minute, and then they perceived the necessity of pulling out of the course of the floating mass, who came on like a torrent, the men sweeping their boats with that desperate stroke which is so often seen among the Italian oarsmen. A menacing hail, with a command to remain, admonished Don Camillo of the necessity of downright flight, or of obedience. He chose the latter, as the least likely to interfere with his own plans.

"Who art thou?" demanded one, who had assumed the character of a leader. "If men of the Lagunes and Christians, join your friends, and away with us to St. Mark, for justice!"

"What means this tumult?" asked Don Camillo, whose dress effectually concealed his rank, a disguise that he completed by adopting the Venetian dialect. "Why are you here in these numbers, friends?"

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"Behold!"

Don Camillo turned, and he beheld the withered features and glaring eyes of old Antonio, fixed in death. The explanation was made by a hundred voices, accompanied by oaths so bitter, and denunciations so deep, that had not Don Camillo been prepared by the tale of Jacopo, he would have found great difficulty in understanding what he heard.

In dragging the Lagunes for fish, the body of Antonio had been found, and the result was, first a consultation on the probable means of his death, then a collection of the men of his calling, and finally the scene described.

"Giustizia!" exclaimed fifty excited voices, as the grim visage of the fisherman was held toward the light of the moon; "giustizia in palazzo, e pane in piazza!"

"Ask it of the senate!" returned Jacopo, not attempting to conceal the derision of his tones.

"Thinkest thou our fellow has suffered for his boldness yesterday?"

"Stranger things have happened in Venice!"

"They forbid us to cast our nets in the Canale Orfano, lest the secrets of justice should be known, and yet they have grown bold enough to drown one of our own people in the midst of our gondolas!"

"Justice, justice!" shouted numberless hoarse throats.

"Away to St. Mark's! Lay the body at the feet of the Doge—away, brethren—Antonio's blood is on their souls!"

Bent on a wild and undigested scheme of asserting their wrongs, the fishermen again plied their oars, and the whole fleet swept away, as if it were composed of a single mass.

The meeting, though so short, was accompanied by cries, menaces, and all those accustomed signs of rage which mark a popular tumult among those excitable people, and it had produced a sensible effect on the nerves of Annina. Don Camillo profited by her evident terror to press his questions, for the hour no longer admitted of trifling.

The result was, that while the agitated mob swept into the mouth of the Great Canal, raising hoarse shouts, the gondola of Don Camillo Monforte glided away across the wide and tranquil surface of the Lagunes.

CHAPTER XXII.

A Clifford, a Clifford! we'll follow the king and Clifford.—*Henry VI.*

THE tranquillity of the best-ordered society may be disturbed, at any time, by a sudden outbreaking of the malcontents. Against such a disaster there is no more guarding than against the commission of more vulgar crimes; but when a government trembles for its existence, before the turbulence of popular commotion, it is reasonable to infer some radical defect in its organization. Men will rally around their institutions, as freely as they rally around any other cherished interest, when they merit their care, and there can be no surer sign of their hollowness than when the rulers seriously apprehend the breath of the mob. No nation ever exhibited more of this symptomatic terror, on all occasions of internal disturbance, than the pretending republic of Venice. There was a never-ceasing and a natural tendency to dissolution in her factitious system, which was only resisted by the alertness of her aristocracy, and the political buttresses which their ingenuity had reared. Much was said of the venerable character of her polity, and of its consequent security, but it is in vain that selfishness contends with truth. Of all the fallacies with which man has attempted to gloss his expedients there is none more evidently false than that which infers the duration of a social system from the length of time it has already lasted. It would be quite as reasonable to affirm that the man of seventy has the same chances for life as the youth of fifteen, or that the inevitable fate of all things of mortal origin was not destruction. There is a period in human existence, when the principle of vitality has to contend with the feebleness of infancy, but this probationary state passed, the child attains the age when it has the most reasonable prospect of living. Thus the social, like any other machine, which has run just long enough to prove its fitness, is at the precise period when it is least likely to fail, and although he that is young may not live to become old, it is certain that he who is old was once young. The empire of China was, in its time, as youthful as our own republic, nor can we see any reason for believing that it is to outlast us, from the decrepitude which is a natural companion of its years.

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At the period of our tale, Venice boasted much of her antiquity, and dreaded, in an equal degree, her end. She was still strong in her combinations, but they were combinations that had the vicious error of being formed for the benefit of the minority, and which, like the mimic fortresses and moats of a scenic representation, needed only a strong light to destroy the illusion. The alarm with which the patricians heard the shouts of the fishermen, as they swept by the different palaces, on their way to the great square, can be readily imagined. Some feared that the final consummation of their artificial condition, which had so long been anticipated by a secret political instinct, was at length arrived, and began to bethink them of the safest means of providing for their own security. Some listened in admiration, for habit had so far mastered dulness as to have created a species of identity between the state and far more durable things, and they believed that St. Mark had gained a victory, in that decline, which was never exactly intelligible to their apathetic capacities. But a few, and these were the spirits that accumulated all the national good which was vulgarly and falsely ascribed to the system itself, intuitively comprehended the danger, with a just appreciation of its magnitude, as well as of the means to avoid it.

But the rioters were unequal to any estimate of their own forces, and had little aptitude in measuring their accidental advantages. They acted merely on impulse. The manner in which their aged companion had triumphed on the preceding day, his cold repulse by the Doge, and the scene of the Lido, which in truth led to the death of Antonio, had prepared their minds for the tumult. When the body was found, therefore, after the time necessary to collect their forces on the Lagunes, they yielded to passion, and moved away toward the palace of St. Mark, as described, without any other definite object than a simple indulgence of feeling.

On entering the canal, the narrowness of the passage compressed the boats into a mass so dense as, in a measure, to impede the use of oars, and the progress of the crowd was necessarily slow. All were anxious to get as near as possible to the body of Antonio, and, like all mobs, they in some degree frustrated their own objects, by ill-regulated zeal. Once or twice the names of offensive senators were shouted, as if the fishermen intended to visit the crimes of the state on its agents; but these cries passed away in the violent breath that was expended. On reaching the bridge of the Rialto, more than half of the multitude landed, and took the shorter course of the streets to the point of destination, while those in front got on the faster, for being disembarrassed of the pressure in the rear. As they drew nearer to the port, the boats began to loosen, and to take something of the form of a funeral procession.

It was during this moment of change that a powerfully manned gondola swept, with strong strokes, out of a lateral passage into the Great Canal. Accident brought it directly in front of the moving phalanx of boats, that was coming down the same channel. Its crew seemed staggered by the extraordinary appearance, which met their view, and for an instant its course was undecided.

"A gondola of the republic!" shouted fifty fishermen. A single voice added—"Canale Orfano!"

The bare suspicion of such an errand as was implied by the latter words, and at that moment, was sufficient to excite the mob. They raised a cry of denunciation, and some twenty boats made a furious demonstration of pursuit. The menace, however, was sufficient; for quicker far than the movements of the pursuers, the gondoliers of the republic dashed toward the shore, and leaping on one of those passages of planks, which encircle so many of the palaces of Venice, they disappeared by an alley.

Encouraged by this success, the fishermen seized the boat as a waif, and towed it into their own fleet, filling the air with cries of triumph. Curiosity led a few to enter the hearse-like canopy, whence they immediately reissued, dragging forth a priest.

"Who art thou?" hoarsely demanded he who took upon himself the authority of a leader.

"A Carmelite, and a servant of God!"

"Dost thou serve St. Mark? Hast thou been to the Canale Orfano, to shrive a wretch?"

"I am here in attendance on a young and noble lady, who has need of my counsel and

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"Maria undefiled, and her son, who is God! bless thee, Jacopo," whispered a voice that to the excited imagination of the kneeling Bravo appeared to hover in the air.—*The Bravo.*

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prayers. The nappy and the miserable, the free and the captive, are equally my care!"

"Ha!—Thou art not above thy office?—Thou wilt say the prayers for the dead, in behalf of a poor man's soul?"

"My son, I know no difference, in this respect, between the Doge and the poorest fisherman. Still I would not willingly desert the females."

"The ladies shall receive no harm. Come into my boat, for there is need of thy holy office."

Father Anselmo—the reader will readily anticipate that it was he—entered the canopy, said a few words in explanation to his trembling companions, and complied. He was rowed to the leading gondola, and, by a sign, directed to the dead body.

"Thou see'st that corpse, father?" continued his conductor. "It is the face of one who was an upright and pious Christian!"

"He was."

"We all knew him as the oldest and most skilful fisherman of the Lagunes, and one ever ready to assist an unlucky companion."

"I can believe thee!"

"Thou mayest, for the holy books are not more true than my words—yesterday he came down this very canal, in triumph, for he bore away the honors of the regatta from the stoutest oars in Venice."

"I have heard of his success."

"They say that Jacopo, the Bravo he—who once held the best oar in the canals—was of the party! Santa Madonna! such a man was too precious to die!"

"It is the fate of all—rich and poor, strong and feeble, happy and miserable, must alike come to this end."

"Not to this end, reverend Carmelite, for Antonio having given offence to the republic, in the matter of a grandson that is pressed for the galleys, has been sent to purgatory without a Christian hope for his soul."

"There is an eye that watcheth on the meanest of us, son; we will believe he was not forgotten."

"Cospetto!—They say that those the senate looks black upon, get but little aid from the Church! Wilt thou pray for him, Carmelite, and make good thy words?"

"I will," said Father Anselmo, firmly. "Make room, son, that no decency of my duty be overlooked."

The swarthy, expressive faces of the fishermen gleamed with satisfaction, for in the midst of the rude turmoil, they all retained a deep and rooted respect for the offices of the Church in which they had been educated. Silence was quickly obtained, and the boats moved on with greater order than before.

The spectacle was now striking.—In front rowed the gondola which contained the remains of the dead. The widening of the canal, as it approached the port, permitted the rays of the moon to fall upon the rigid features of old Antonio, which were set in such a look as might be supposed to characterize the dying thoughts of a man so suddenly and so fearfully destroyed. The Carmelite, bareheaded, with clasped hands and a devout heart, bowed his head at the feet of the body, with his white robes flowing in the light of the moon. A single gondolier guided the boat, and no other noise was audible but the plash of the water, as the oars slowly fell and rose together. The silent procession lasted a few minutes, and then the tremulous voice of the monk was heard chanting the prayers for the dead. The practised fishermen, for few in that disciplined Church, and that obedient age, were ignorant of those solemn rites, took up the responses, in a manner that must be familiar to every ear that has ever listened to the sounds of Italy, the gentle washing of the element on which they glided forming a soft accompaniment. Casement after casement opened while they passed, and a thousand curious and anxious faces crowded the balconies, as the funeral cortege swept slowly on.

The gondola of the republic was towed in the centre of the moving mass, by fifty lighter boats, for the fishermen still clung to their prize. In this manner the solemn procession entered the port, and touched the quay at the foot of the Piazzetta. While numberless eager hands were aiding in bringing the body of Antonio to land, there arose a shout from the centre of the ducal palace, which proclaimed the presence already of the other part of their body in its court.

The square of St. Mark now presented a novel picture. The quaint and oriental church, the rows of massive and rich archi-

tecture, the giddy pile of the Campanile, the columns of granite, the masts of triumph, and all those peculiar and remarkable fixtures, which had witnessed so many scenes of violence, of rejoicing, of mourning, and of gayety, were there, like landmarks of the earth, defying time; beautiful and venerable in despite of all those varying exhibitions of human passions, that were daily acted around them.

But the song, the laugh, and the jest, had ceased. The lights of the coffee-houses had disappeared, the revellers had fled to their homes, fearful of being confounded with those who braved the anger of the senate, while the grotesque, the ballad-singers, and the buffoon, had abandoned their assumed gayety for an appearance more in unison with the true feelings of their hearts.

"Giustizia!"—cried a thousand deep voices, as the body of Antonio was borne into the court—"Illustrious Doge! Giustizia in palazzo, e pane in piazza! Give us justice! We are beggars for justice!"

The gloomy but vast court was paved with the swarthy faces and glittering eyes of the fishermen. The corpse was laid at the foot of the Giant's Stairs, while the trembling halberdier at the head of the flight scarce commanded himself sufficiently to maintain that air of firmness which was exacted by discipline and professional pride. But there was no other show of military force, for the politic power, which ruled in Venice, knew too well its momentary impotency to irritate when it could not quell. The mob beneath was composed of nameless rioters, whose punishment could carry no other consequences than the suppression of immediate danger, and for that, those who ruled were not prepared.

The Council of Three had been apprised of the arrival of the excited fishermen. When the mob entered the court, it was consulting in secret conclave, on the probabilities of the tumult having a graver and more determined object than was apparent in the visible symptoms. The routine of office had not yet dispossessed the men already presented to the reader, of their dangerous and despotic power.

"Are the Dalmatians apprised of this movement?" asked one of the secret tribunal, whose nerves were scarcely equal to the high functions he discharged. "We may have occasion for their volleys, ere this riot is appeased."

"Confide in the ordinary authorities for that, signor," answered the Senator Gradenigo. "I have only concern, lest some conspiracy, which may touch the fidelity of the troops, lies concealed beneath the outcry."

"The evil passions of man know no limits! What would the wretches have? For a state in the decline, Venice is to the last degree prosperous. Our ships are thriving; the bank flourishes with goodly dividends; and I do assure you, signor, that, for many years, I have not known so ample revenues for most of our interests, as at this hour. All cannot thrive alike!"

"You are happily connected with flourishing affairs, signor, but there are many that are less lucky. Our form of government is somewhat exclusive, and it is a penalty that we have ever paid for its advantages, to be liable to sudden and malevolent accusations for any evil turn of fortune that besets the republic."

"Can nothing satisfy these exacting spirits? Are they not free—are they not happy?"

"It would seem that they want better assurance of these facts than our own feelings, or our words."

"Man is the creature of envy! The poor desire to be rich—the weak, powerful."

"There is an exception to your rule, at least, signor, since the rich rarely wish to be poor, or the powerful, weak."

"You deride my sentiments to-night, Signor Gradenigo. I speak, I hope, as becomes a senator of Venice, and in a manner that you are not unaccustomed to hear!"

"Nay, the language is not unusual. But I fear me, there is something unsuited to a falling fortune in the exacting and narrow spirit of our laws. When a state is eminently flourishing, its subjects overlook general defects, in private prosperity, but there is no more fastidious commentator on measures than your merchant of a failing trade."

"This is their gratitude! Have we not converted these muddy isles into a mart for

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half Christendom? and now they are dissatisfied that they cannot retain all the monopolies that the wisdom of our ancestors has accumulated."

"They complain much in your own spirit, signor,—but you are right in saying the present riot must be looked to. Let us seek his highness, who will go out to the people, with such patricians as may be present, and one of our number as a witness: more than that might expose our character."

The Secret Council withdrew to carry this resolution into effect, just as the fishermen in the court received the accession of those who arrived by water.

There is no body so sensible of an increase of its members as a mob. Without discipline, and depending solely on animal force for its ascendency, the sentiment of physical power is blended with its very existence. When they saw the mass of living beings which had assembled within the walls of the ducal palace, the most audacious of that throng became more hardy, and even the wavering grew strong. This is the reverse of the feeling which prevails among those who are called on to repress this species of violence, who generally gain courage as its exhibition is least required.

The throng in the court was raising one of its loudest and most menacing cries as the train of the Doge appeared, approaching by one of the long open galleries of the principal floor of the edifice.

The presence of the venerable man who nominally presided over that factitious state, and the long training of the fishermen in habits of deference to authority, notwithstanding their present tone of insubordination, caused a sudden and deep silence. A feeling of awe gradually stole over the thousand dark faces that were gazing upwards, as the little cortege drew near. So profound, indeed, was the stillness caused by this sentiment, that the rustling of the ducal robes was audible, as the prince, impeded by his infirmities, and consulting the state usual to his rank, slowly advanced. The previous violence of the untutored fishermen, and their present deference to the external state that met their eyes, had their origin in the same causes;—ignorance and habit were the parents of both.

"Why are ye assembled here, my children?" asked the Doge, when he had reached the summit of the Giant's Stairs,—"and most of all, why have ye come into the palace of your prince, with these unbefitting cries?"

The tremulous voice of the old man was clearly audible, for the lowest of its tones was scarcely interrupted by a breath. The fishermen gazed at each other, and all appeared to search for him who might be bold enough to answer. At length one in the centre of the crowded mass, and effectually concealed from observation, cried, "Justice!"

"Such is our object," mildly continued the prince; "and such, I will add, is our practice. Why are ye assembled here, in a manner so offensive to the state, and so disrespectful to your prince?"

Still none answered. The only spirit of their body, which had been capable of freeing itself from the trammels of usage and prejudice, had deserted the shell which lay on the lower step of the Giant's Stairs.

"Will none speak?—are ye so bold with your voices when unquestioned, and so silent when confronted?"

"Speak them fair, your highness," whispered he of the council, who was commissioned to be a secret witness of the interview;—"the Dalmatians are scarce yet apparelled."

The prince bowed to advice which he well knew must be respected, and he assumed his former tone.

"If none will acquaint me with your wants, I must command you to retire, and while my parental heart grieves——"

"Giustizia!" repeated the hidden member of the crowd.

"Name thy wants, that we may know them."

"Highness! deign to look at this!"

One bolder than the rest had turned the body of Antonio to the moon, in a manner to expose the ghastly features, and, as he spoke, he pointed toward the spectacle he had prepared. The prince started at the unexpected sight, and, slowly descending the steps, closely accompanied by his companions and his guards, he paused over the body.

"Has the assassin done this?" he asked, after looking at the dead fisherman, and crossing himself. "What could the end of

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one like this profit a Bravo?—haply the unfortunate man hath fallen in a broil of his class?"

"Neither, illustrious Doge! we fear that Antonio has suffered for the displeasure of St. Mark!"

"Antonio! Is this the hardy fisherman who would have taught us how to rule in the state regatta?"

"Eccellenza, it is," returned the simple laborer of the Lagunes,—"and a better hand with a net, or a truer friend in need, never rowed a gondola, to or from the Lido. Diavolo! It would have done your highness pleasure to have seen the poor old Christian among us, on a saint's day, taking the lead in our little ceremonies, and teaching us the manner in which our fathers used to do credit to the craft!"

"Or to have been with us, illustrious Doge," cried another, for, the ice once broken, the tongues of a mob soon grow bold, "in a merry-making, on the Lido, when old Antonio was always the foremost in the laugh, and the discreetest in knowing when to be grave."

The Doge began to have a dawning of the truth, and he cast a glance aside to examine the countenance of the unknown inquisitor.

"It is far easier to understand the merits of the unfortunate man, than the manner of his death," he said, finding no explanation in the drilled members of the face he had scrutinized. "Will any of your party explain the facts?"

The principal speaker among the fishermen willingly took on himself the office, and, in the desultory manner of one of his habits, he acquainted the Doge with the circumstances connected with the finding of the body. When he had done, the prince again asked explanations, with his eye, from the senator at his side, for he was ignorant whether the policy of the state required an example, or simply a death.

"I see nothing in this, your highness," observed he of the council, "but the chances of a fisherman. The unhappy old man has come to his end by accident, and it would be charity to have a few masses said for his soul."

"Noble senator!" exclaimed the fisherman, doubtingly, "St. Mark was offended!"

"Rumor tells many idle tales of the pleasure and displeasure of St. Mark. If we are to believe all that the wit of men can devise, in affairs of this nature, the criminals are not drowned in the Lagunes, but in the Canale Orfano."

"True, eccellenza, and we are forbidden to cast our nets there, on pain of sleeping with the eels at its bottom."

"So much greater reason for believing that this old man hath died by accident. Is there mark of violence on his body?—for though the state could scarcely occupy itself with such as he, some other might. Hath the condition of the body been looked to?"

"Eccellenza, it was enough to cast one of his years into the centre of the Lagunes. The stoutest arm in Venice could not save him."

"There may have been violence in some quarrel, and the proper authority should be vigilant. Here is a Carmelite!—Father, do you know aught of this?"

The monk endeavored to answer, but his voice failed. He stared wildly about him, for the whole scene resembled some frightful picture of the imagination, and then folding his arms on his bosom, he appeared to resume his prayers.

"Thou dost not answer, friar?" observed the Doge, who had been as effectually deceived, by the natural and indifferent manner of the inquisitor, as any other of his auditors. "Where didst thou find this body?"

Father Anselmo briefly explained the manner in which he had been pressed into the service of the fishermen.

At the elbow of the prince there stood a young patrician, who, at the moment, filled no other office in the state than such as belonged to his birth. Deceived, like the others, by the manner of the only one who knew the real cause of Antonio's death, he felt a humane and praiseworthy desire to make sure that no foul play had been exercised towards the victim.

"I have heard of this Antonio," said this person, who was called the Senator Soranzo, and who was gifted by nature with feelings that, in any other form of government, would have made him a philanthropist,—"and of his success in the regatta. Was it not said that Jacopo, the Bravo, was his competitor?"

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A low, meaning, and common murmur ran through the throng.

"A man of his reputed passions and ferocity may well have sought to revenge defeat, by violence!"

A second and a louder murmur denoted the effect this suggestion had produced.

"Eccellenza, Jacopo deals in the stiletto!" observed the half-credulous but still doubting fisherman.

"That is as may be necessary. A man of his art and character may have recourse to other means to gratify his malice. Do you not agree with me, signor?"

The Senator Soranzo put this question, in perfect good faith, to the unknown member of the secret council. The latter appeared struck with the probability of the truth of his companion's conjecture, but contented himself with a simple acknowledgment to that effect, by bowing.

"Jacopo!—Jacopo!" hoarsely repeated voice after voice in the crowd—"Jacopo has done this! The best gondolier in Venice has been beaten by an old fisherman, and nothing but blood could wipe out the disgrace!"

"It shall be inquired into, my children, and strict justice done," said the Doge, prepairing to depart. "Officers, give money for masses, that the soul of the unhappy man be not the sufferer. Reverend Carmelite, I commend the body to thy care, and thou canst do no better service than to pass the night in prayer, by its side."

A thousand caps were waved in commendation of this gracious command, and the whole throng stood in silent respect, as the prince, followed by his retinue, retired as he had approached, through the long, vaulted gallery above.

A secret order of the Inquisition prevented the appearance of the Dalmatians.

A few minutes later and all was prepared. A bier and canopy were brought out of the adjoining cathedral, and the corpse was placed upon the former. Father Anselmo then headed the procession, which passed through the principal gate of the palace into the square, chanting the usual service. The Piazzetta and the piazza were still empty. Here and there, indeed, a curious face, belonging to some agent of the police, or to some observer more firm than common, looked out from beneath the arches of the porticos on the movements of the mob, though none ventured to come within its influence.

But the fisherment were no longer bent on violence. With the fickleness of men little influenced by reflection, and subject to sudden and violent emotions, a temperament which, the effect of a selfish system, is commonly tortured into the reason why it should never be improved, they had abandoned all idea of revenge on the agents of the police, and had turned their thoughts to the religious services, which, being commanded by the prince himself, were so flattering to their class.

It is true that a few of the sterner natures, among them, mingled menaces against the Bravo, with their prayers for the dead, but these had no other effect on the matter in hand than is commonly produced by the by-players on the principal action of the piece.

The great portal of the venerable church was thrown open, and the solemn chant was heard issuing, in responses, from among the quaint columns and vaulted roofs within. The body of the lowly and sacrificed Antonio was borne beneath that arch which sustains the precious relics of Grecian art, and deposited in the grave. Candles glimmered before the altar and the ghastly person of the dead, throughout the night; and the cathedral of St. Mark was pregnant with all the imposing ceremonials of the Catholic ritual, until the day once more appeared.

Priest succeeded priest, in repeating the masses, while the attentive throng listened, as if each of its members felt that his own honor and importance were elevated by this concession to one of their number. In the square the maskers gradually reappeared, though the alarm had been too sudden and violent to admit a speedy return to the levity which ordinarily was witnessed in that spot, between the setting and the rising of the sun.

CHAPTER XXIII.

'Tis of a lady in her earliest youth,
The very last of that illustrious race.
—ROGERS.

WHEN the fishermen landed on the quay, they deserted the gondola of the state to a

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man. Donna Violetta and her governess heard the tumultuous departure of their singular captors with alarm, for they were nearly in entire ignorance of the motive which had deprived them of the protection of Father Anselmo, and which had so unexpectedly made them actors in the extraordinary scene. The monk had simply explained that his offices were required in behalf of the dead, but the apprehension of exciting unnecessary terror prevented him from adding that they were in the power of a mob. Donna Florinda, however, had ascertained sufficient, by looking from the windows of the canopy and from the cries of those around her, to get a glimmering of the truth. Under the circumtances, she saw that the most prudent course was to keep themselves as much as possible from observation. But when the profound stillness that succeeded the landing of the rioters announced that they were alone, both she and her charge had an intuitive perception of the favorable chance, which fortune had so strangely thrown in their way.

"They are gone!" whispered Donna Florinda, holding her breath in attention, as soon as she had spoken.

"And the police will soon be here to seek us!"

No further explanation passed, for Venice was a town in which even the young and innocent were taught caution. Donna Florinda stole another look without.

"They have disappeared, Heaven knows where! Let us go!"

In an instant the trembling fugitives were on the quay. The Piazzetta was without a human form, except their own. A low, murmuring sound arose from the court palace, which resembled the hum of a disturbed hive; but nothing was distinct or intelligible.

"There is violence meditated," again whispered the governess; "would to God that Father Anselmo were here!"

A shuffling footstep caught their ears, and both turned toward a boy, in the dress of one of the Lagunes, who approached from the direction of the Broglio.

"A reverend Carmelite bid me give you this," said the youth, stealing a glance behind him, like one who dreaded detection. Then putting a small piece of paper in the hand of Donna Florinda, he turned his own swarthy palm, in which a small silver coin glittered, to the moon, and vanished.

By the aid of the same light the governess succeeded in tracing pencil-marks, in a hand that had been well known in her younger days.

"Save thyself, Florinda—there is not an instant to lose. Avoid public places, and seek a shelter quickly."

"But whither?" asked the bewildered woman, when she had read aloud the scroll.

"Anywhere but here," rejoined Donna Violetta; "follow me."

Nature frequently more than supplies the advantages of training and experience, by her own gifts. Had Donna Florinda been possessed of the natural decision and firmness of her pupil, she would not now have been existing in the isolated condition which is so little congenial to female habits, nor would Father Anselmo have been a monk. Both had sacrificed inclination to what they considered to be duty, and if the ungenial life of the governess was owing to the tranquil course of her ordinary feelings, it is probable that its impunity was to be ascribed to the same respectable cause. Not so with Violetta. She was ever more ready to act than to reflect, and though, in general, the advantage might possibly be with those of a more regulated temperament, there are occasions that form exceptions to the rule. The present moment was one of those turns in the chances of life, when it is always better to do anything than to do nothing.

Donna Violetta had scarcely spoken, before her person was shadowed beneath the arches of the Broglio. Her governess clung to her side, more in affection than in compliance with the warning of the monk, or with the dictates of her own reason. A vague and romantic intention of throwing herself at the feet of the Doge, who was a collateral descendant of her own ancient house, had flashed across the mind of the youthful bride, when she first fled; but no sooner had they reached the palace, than a cry from the court acquainted them with its situation, and consequently with the impossibility of penetrating to the interior.

"Let us retire, by the streets, to thy dwelling, my child," said Donna Florinda, drawing her mantle about her in womanly

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dignity. "None will offend females of our condition; even the senate must, in the end, respect our sex."

"This from thee, Florinda!—Thou, who hast so often trembled for their anger! But go, if thou wilt—I am no longer the senate's—Don Camillo Monforte has my duty."

Donna Florinda had no intention of disputing this point, and as the moment had now arrived when the most energetic was likely to lead, she quietly submitted herself to the superior decision of her pupil. The latter took the way along the portico, keeping always within its shadows. In passing the gateway, which opened towards the sea, the fugitives had a glimpse of what was passing in the court. The sight quickened their steps, and they now flew, rather than ran, along the arched passage. In a minute they were on the bridge, which crosses the canal of St. Mark, still flying with all their force. A few mariners were looking from their feluccas and gazing in curiosity, but the sight of two terrified females, seeking refuge from a mob, had nothing in itself likely to attract notice.

At this moment, a dark mass of human bodies appeared advancing along the quay in the opposite direction. Arms glittered in the moonbeams, and the measured tread of trained men became audible. The Dalmatians were moving down from the arsenal in a body. Advance and retreat now seemed equally impossible to the breathless fugitives. As decision and self-possession are very different qualities, Donna Violetta did not understand so readily as the circumstances required, that it was more than probable the hirelings of the republic would consider the flight perfectly natural, as it had appeared to the curious gazers of the port.

Terror made them blind, and as shelter was now the sole object of the fugitives, they would probably have sought it in the chamber of doom itself, had there been an opportunity. As it was, they turned and entered the first, and indeed the only, gate which offered. They were met by a girl, whose anxious face betrayed that singular compound of self-devotion and terror, which probably has its rise in the instinct of feminine sympathies.

"Here is safety, noble ladies," said the youthful Venetian, in the soft accent of her native islands; "none will dare do you harm within these walls."

"Into whose palace have I entered?" demanded the half-breathless Violetta. "If its owner has a name in Venice, he will not refuse hospitality to a daughter of Tiepolo."

"Signora, you are welcome," returned the gentle girl, courtesying low, and still leading the way deeper within the vast edifice. "You bear the name of an illustrious house.

"There are few in the republic of note from whom I may not claim, either the kindness of ancient and near service, or that of kindred. Dost thou serve a noble master?"

"The first in Venice, lady."

"Name him, that we may demand his hospitality as befits us."

"Saint Mark."

Donna Violetta and her governess stopped short.

"Have we unconsciously entered a portal of the palace?"

"That were impossible, lady, since the canal lies between you and the residence of the Doge. Still is St. Mark master here. I hope you will not esteem your safety less, because it has been obtained in the public prison, and by the aid of its keeper's daughter."

The moment for headlong decision was passed, and that of reflection had returned.

"How art thou called, child?" asked Donna Florinda, moving ahead of her pupil and taking the discourse up, where in wonder the other had permitted it to pause. "We are truly grateful for the readiness with which thou threw open the gate for our admission, in a moment of such alarm—How art thou called?"

"Gelsomina," answered the modest girl. "I am the keeper's only child—and when I saw ladies of your honorable condition, fleeing on the quay, with the Dalmatians marching on one side, and a mob shouting on the other, I bethought me that even a prison might be welcome."

"Thy goodness of heart did not mislead thee."

"Had I known it was a lady of the Tiepolo, I should have been even more ready; for there are few of that great name now left to do us honor."

Violetta courtesied to the compliment, but

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she seemed uneasy that haste and pride of rank had led her, so indiscreetly, to betray herself.

"Canst thou not lead us to some place less public?" she asked, observing that her conductor had stopped in a public corridor to make this explanation.

"Here you will be retired as in your own palaces, great ladies;" answered Gelsomina, turning into a private passage, and leading the way towards the rooms of her family, from a window of which she had first witnessed the embarrassment of her guests. "None enter here, without cause, but my father and myself; and my father is much occupied with his charge."

"Hast thou no domestic?"

"None, lady. A prison-keeper's daughter should not be too proud to serve herself."

"Thou sayest well. One of thy discretion, good Gelsomina, must know it is not seemly for females of condition to be thrown within walls like these, even by accident, and thou wilt do us much favor, by taking more than common means, to be certain that we are unseen. We give thee much trouble, but it shall not go unrequited. Here is gold."

Gelsomina did not answer, but as she stood with her eyes cast to the floor, the color stole to her cheeks, until her usually bloodless face was in a soft glow.

"Nay, I have mistaken thy character!" said Donna Florinda, secreting the sequins, and taking the unresisting hand of the silent girl. "If I have pained thee, by my indiscretion, attribute the offer to our dread of the disgrace of being seen in this place."

The glow deepened, and the lips of the girl quivered.

"Is it then a disgrace to be innocently within these walls, lady?" she asked, still with an averted eye. "I have long suspected this, but none has ever before said it, in my hearing!"

"Holy Maria pardon me! If I have uttered a syllable to pain thee, excellent girl, it has been unwittingly and without intention!"

"We are poor, lady, and the needy must submit to do that which their wishes might lead them to avoid. I understand your feelings, and will make sure of your being secret, and Blessed Maria will pardon a greater sin than any you have committed here."

While the ladies were wondering, at witnessing such proofs of delicacy and feeling in so singular a place, the girl withdrew.

"I had not expected this in a prison!" exclaimed Violetta.

"As all is not noble, or just, in a palace, neither is all to be condemned unheard, that we find in a prison. But this is, in sooth, an extraordinary girl for her condition, and we are indebted to blessed St. Theodore (crossing herself), for putting her in our way."

"Can we do better than by making her a confidante and a friend?"

The governess was older, and less disposed than her pupil, to confide in appearances. But the more ardent mind and superior rank of the latter had given her an influence that the former did not always successfully resist. Gelsomina returned before there was time to discuss the prudence of what Violetta had proposed.

"Thou hast a father, Gelsomina?" asked the Venetian heiress, taking the hand of the gentle girl, as she put her question.

"Holy Maria be praised!—I have still that happiness."

"It is a happiness—for surely a father would not have the heart to sell his own child to ambition and mercenary hopes! And thy mother?"

"Has long been bed-ridden, lady. I believe we should not have been here, but we have no other place so suitable for her sufferings, as this jail."

"Gelsomina, thou art happier than I, even in thy prison. I am fatherless—motherless—I could almost say, friendless."

"And this from a lady of the Tiepolo!"

"All is not as it seems in this evil world, kind Gelsomina. We have had many doges, but we have had much suffering. Thou mayest have heard that the house of which I come is reduced to a single, youthful girl like thyself, who has been left in the senate's charge?"

"They speak little of these matters, lady, in Venice; and, of all here, none go so seldom into the square as I. Still have I heard of the beauty and riches of Donna Violetta. The last I hope is true; the first I now see is so."

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The daughter of Tiepolo colored, in turn, but it was not in resentment.

"They have spoken in too much kindness for an orphan," she answered; "though that fatal wealth is perhaps not overestimated. Thou knowest that the state charges itself with the care and establishment of all noble females, whom Providence has left fatherless?"

"Lady, I did not. It is kind of St. Mark to do it!"

"Thou wilt think differently, anon. Thou art young, Gelsomina, and hast passed thy time in privacy?"

"True, lady. It is seldom I go farther than my mother's room, or the cell of some suffering prisoner."

Violetta looked toward her governess, with an expression which seemed to say that she anticipated her appeal would be made in vain, to one so little exposed to the feelings of the world.

"Thou wilt not understand, then, that a noble female may have little inclination to comply with all the senate's wishes, in disposing of her duties and affections?"

Gelsomina gazed at the fair speaker, but it was evident that she did not clearly comprehend the question. Again Violetta looked at the governess as if asking aid.

"The duties of our sex are often painful," said Donna Florinda, understanding the appeal with female instinct. "Our attachments may not always follow the wishes of our friends. We may not choose, but we cannot always obey."

"I have heard that noble ladies are not suffered to see those to whom they are to be wedded, signora, if that is what your eccellenza means, and, to me, the custom has always seemed unjust, if not cruel."

"And are females of thy class permitted to make friends among those who may become dearer at any other day?" asked Violetta.

"Lady, we have that much freedom even in the prisons."

"Then art thou happier than those of the palaces! I will trust thee, generous girl, for thou canst not be unfaithful to the weakness and wrongs of thy sex."

Gelsomina raised a hand, as if to stop the impetuous confidence of her guest, and then she listened intently.

"Few enter here," she said; "but there are many ways of learning secrets within these walls which are still unknown to me. Come deeper into the rooms, noble ladies, for here is a place that I have reason to think is safe, even from listeners."

The keeper's daughter led the way into the little room in which she was accustomed to converse with Jacopo.

"You were saying, lady, that I had a feeling for the weakness and helplessness of our sex; and surely you did me justice."

Violetta had leisure to reflect an instant, in passing from one room to the other, and she began her communications with more reserve. But the sensitive interest that a being of the gentle nature and secluded habits of Gelsomina took in her narrative, won upon her own natural frankness, and, in a manner nearly imperceptible to herself, she made the keeper's daughter mistress of most of the circumstances under which she had entered the prison.

The cheek of Gelsomina became colorless as she listened, and when Donna Violetta ceased, every limb of her slight frame trembled with interest.

"The senate is a fearful power to resist!" she said, speaking so low as hardly to be audible. "Have you reflected, lady, on the chances of what you do?"

"If I have not, it is now too late to change my intentions. I am the wife of the Duke of Sant' Agata, and can never wed another."

"Gesu!—This is true.—And yet, methinks, I would choose to die a nun rather than offend the council!"

"Thou knowest not, good girl, to what courage the heart of even a young wife is equal.—Thou art still bound to thy father, in the instruction and habits of childhood, but thou mayest live to know that all thy hopes will centre in another."

Gelsomina ceased to tremble, and her mild eye brightened.

"The council is terrible," she answered, "but it must be more terrible to desert one to whom you have vowed duty and love at the altar!"

"Hast thou the means of concealing us, kind girl," interrupted Donna Florinda, "and canst thou, when this tumult shall be quieted, in any manner help us to farther secrecy or flight?"

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"Lady, I have none. Even the streets and squares of Venice are nearly strangers to me. Santissima Maria! what would I give to know the ways of the town as well as my cousin Annina, who passes, at will, from her father's shop to the Lido, and from St. Mark's to the Rialto, as her pleasure suits. I will send for my cousin, who will counsel us in this fearful strait!"

"Thy cousin!—Hast thou a cousin named Annina?"

"Lady, Annina. My mother's sister's child."

"The daughter of a wine-seller called Tommaso Torti?"

"Do the noble dames of the city take such heed of their inferiors!—This will charm my cousin, for she has great desires to be noted by the great."

"And does thy cousin come hither?"

"Rarely, lady—We are not of much intimacy. I suppose Annina finds a girl, simple and uninstructed as I, unworthy of her company. But she will not refuse to aid us, in a danger like this. I know she little loves the republic, for we have had words on its acts, and my cousin has been bolder of speech about them, than befits one of her years, in this prison."

"Gelsomina, thy cousin is a secret agent of the police, and unworthy of thy confidence——"

"Lady!"

"I do not speak without reason. Trust me, she is employed in duties that are unbecoming her sex, and unworthy of thy confidence."

"Noble dames, I will not say anything to do displeasure to your high rank and present distress, but you should not urge me to think thus of my mother's niece. You have been unhappy, and you may have cause to dislike the republic, and you are safe here—but I do not desire to hear Annina censured."

Both Donna Florinda and her less experienced pupil knew enough of human nature, to consider this generous incredulity as a favorable sign of the integrity of her who manifested it, and they wisely contented themselves with stipulating that Annina should, on no account, be made acquainted with their situation. After this understanding, the three discussed, more leisurely, the prospect of the fugitives being able to quit the place, when ready, without detection.

At the suggestion of the governess, a servitor of the prison was sent out by Gelsomina, to observe the state of the square. He was particularly charged, though in a manner to avoid suspicion, to search for a Carmelite of the order of the bare-footed friars. On his return, the menial reported that the mob had quitted the court of the palace, and was gone to the cathedral, with the body of the fisherman who had so unexpectedly gained the prize in the regatta of the preceding day.

"Repeat your aves and go to sleep, Bella Gelsomina," concluded the sub-keeper, "for the fishermen have left off shouting to say their prayers. Per Diana! The bare-headed and bare-legged rascals are as impudent as if St. Mark were their inheritance! The noble patricians should give them a lesson in modesty, by sending every tenth knave among them to the galleys. Miscreants! to disturb the quiet of an orderly town with their vulgar complaints!"

"But thou hast said nothing of the friar; is he with the rioters?"

"There is a Carmelite at the altar—but my blood boiled at seeing such vagabonds disturb the peace of respectable persons, and I took little note of his air or years."

"Then thou failedst to do the errand on which I sent thee. It is now too late to repair thy fault. Thou canst return to thy charge."

"A million pardons, Bellissima Gelsomina, but indignation is the uppermost feeling, when one in office sees his rights attacked by the multitude. Send me to Corfu, or to Candia, if you please, and I will bring back the color of every stone in their prisons, but do not send me among rebels. My gorge rises at the sight of villany!"

As the keeper's daughter withdrew, while her father's assistant was making this protestation of loyalty, the latter was compelled to give vent to the rest of his indignation in a soliloquy.

One of the tendencies of oppression is to create a scale of tyranny, descending from those who rule a state, to those who domineer over a single individual. He, who has been much accustomed to view men, need not be

told that none are so arrogant with their inferiors as those who are oppressed by their superiors; for poor human nature has a secret longing to revenge itself on the weak for all the injuries it receives from the strong. On the other hand, no class is so willing to render that deference when unexacted, which is the proper need of virtue, and experience, and intelligence, as he who knows that he is fortified on every side against innovations on his natural rights. Thus it is, that there is more security against popular violence and popular insults in these free states, than in any other country on earth, for there is scarcely a citizen so debased as not to feel that, in assuming the appearance of a wish to revenge the chances of fortune, he is making an undue admission of inferiority.

Though the torrent may be pent and dammed by art, it is with the constant hazard of breaking down the unnatural barriers; but left to its own course, it will become the tranquil and the deep stream, until it finally throws off its superfluous waters into the common receptacle of the ocean.

When Gelsomina returned to her visitors, it was with a report favorable to their tranquillity. The riot in the court of the palace, and the movement of the Dalmatians, had drawn all eyes in another direction; and although some errant gaze might have witnessed their entrance into the gate of the prison, it was so natural a circumstance, that no one would suspect females of their appearance of remaining there an instant longer than was necessary. The momentary absence of the few servants of the prison, who took little heed of those who entered the open parts of the building, and who had been drawn away by curiosity, completed their security. The humble room they were in was exclusively devoted to the use of their gentle protector, and there was scarcely a possibility of interruption, until the council had obtained the leisure and the means of making use of those terrible means, which rarely left anything it wished to know concealed.

With this explanation Donna Violetta and her companion were greatly satisfied. It left them leisure to devise means for their flight, and kindled a hope in the former of being speedily restored to Don Camillo. Still there existed the cruel embarrassment of not possessing the means of acquainting the latter with their situation. As the tumult ceased, they resolved to seek a boat, favored by such disguises as the means of Gelsomina could supply, and to row to his palace; but reflection convinced Donna Florinda of the danger of such a step, since the Neapolitan was known to be surrounded by the agents of the police. Accident, which is more effectual than stratagem in defeating intrigues, had thrown them into a place of momentary security, and it would be to lose the vantage-ground of their situation to cast themselves, without the utmost caution, into the hazards of the public canals.

At length the governess bethought her of turning the services of the gentle creature, who had already shown so much sympathy in their behalf, to account. During the revelations of her pupil, the feminine instinct of Donna Florinda had enabled her to discover the secret springs which moved the unpractised feelings of their auditor. Gelsomina had listened to the manner in which Don Camillo had thrown himself into the canal to save the life of Violetta, with breathless admiration; her countenance was a pure reflection of her thoughts, when the daughter of Tiepolo spoke of the risks he had run to gain her love, and woman glowed in every lineament of her mild face, when the youthful bride touched on the nature of the engrossing tie which had united them, and which was far too holy to be severed by the senate's policy.

"If we had the means of getting our position to the ears of Don Camillo," said the governess, "all might yet be served; else will this happy refuge in the prison avail us nothing."

"Is the cavalier of too stout a heart to shrink before those up above?" demanded Gelsomina.

"He would summon the people of his confidence, and ere the dawn of day we might still be beyond their power. Those calculating senators will deal with the vows of my pupil, as if they were childish oaths, and set the anger of the Holy See itself at defiance, when there is question of their interest."

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"But the sacrament of marriage is not of man; that, at least, they will respect!"

"Believe it not. There is no obligation so solemn as to be respected, when their policy is concerned. What are the wishes of a girl, or what the happiness of a solitary and helpless female, to their fortunes? That my charge is young, is a reason why their wisdom should interfere, though it is none to touch their hearts with the reflection that the misery to which they would condemn her, is to last the longer. They take no account of the solemn obligations of gratitude; the ties of affection are so many means of working upon the fears of those they rule, but none for forbearance; and they laugh at the devotedness of woman's love, as a folly to amuse their leisure, or to take off the edge of disappointment in graver concerns."

"Can anything be more grave than wedlock, lady?"

"To them it is important, as it furnishes the means of perpetuating their honors and their proud names. Beyond this, the councils look little at domestic interests."

"They are fathers and husbands!"

"True, for to be legally the first, they must become the last. Marriage to them is not a tie of sacred and dear affinity, but the means of increasing their riches and of sustaining their names;" continued the governess, watching the effect of her words on the countenance of the guileless girl. "They call marriages of affection children's games, and they deal with the wishes of their own daughters, as they would traffic with their commodities of commerce. When a state sets up an idol of gold as its god, few will refuse to sacrifice at its altar."

"I would I might serve the noble Donna Violetta!"

"Thou art too young, good Gelsomina, and I fear too little practised in the cunning of Venice."

"Doubt me not, lady; for I can do my duty like another, in a good cause."

"If it were possible to convey to Don Camillo Monforte a knowledge of our situation—but thou art too inexperienced for the service!"

"Believe it not, signora," interrupted the generous Gelsomina, whose pride began to stimulate her natural sympathies with one so near her own age, and one too, like herself, subject to that passion which engrosses a female heart. "I may be apter than my appearance would give reason to think."

"I will trust thee, kind girl, and if the Sainted Virgin protects us, thy fortunes shall not be forgotten!"

The pious Gelsomina crossed herself, and, first acquainting her companions with her intentions, she went within to prepare herself, while Donna Florinda penned a note, in terms so guarded as to defy detection in the event of accident, but which might suffice to let the lord of St. Agata understand their present situation.

In a few minutes the keeper's daughter reappeared. Her ordinary attire, which was that of a modest Venetian maiden of humble condition, needed no concealment; and the mask, an article of dress which none in that city were without, effectually disguised her features. She then received the note, with the name of the street, and the palace she was to seek, a description of the person of the Neapolitan, with often-repeated cautions to be wary, and departed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Which is the wiser here?—Justice or iniquity?
—*Measure for Measure.*

In the constant struggle between the innocent and the artful, the latter have the advantage, so long as they confine themselves to familiar interests. But the moment the former conquer their disgust for the study of vice, and throw themselves upon the protection of their own high principles, they are far more effectually concealed from the calculations of their adversaries than if they practised the most refined of their subtle expedients. Nature has given to every man enough of frailty to enable him to estimate the workings of selfishness and fraud, but her truly privileged are those who can shroud their motives and intentions in a degree of justice and disinterestedness which surpasses the calculations of the designing. Millions may bow to the commands of a conventional right, but few, indeed, are they who know how to choose in novel and difficult cases. There is often a mystery in virtue. While

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the cunning of vice is no more than a pitiful imitation of that art which endeavors to cloak its workings in the thin veil of deception, the other, in some degree, resembles the sublimity of infallible truth.

Thus men, too much practised in the interests of life, constantly overreach themselves, when brought in contact with the simple and intelligent; and the experience of every day proves, that, as there is no fame permanent which is not founded on virtue, so there is no policy secure which is not bottomed on the good of the whole. Vulgar minds may control the concerns of a community, so long as they are limited to vulgar views; but woe to the people who confide, on great emergencies, in any but the honest, the noble, the wise, and the philanthropic; for there is no security for success when the meanly artful control the occasional and providential events which regenerate a nation. More than half the misery which has defeated, as well as disgraced, civilization, proceeds from neglecting to use those great men that are always created by great occasions.

Treating, as we are, of the vices of the Venetian system, our pen has run truant with its subject, since the application of the moral must be made on the familiar scale suited to the incidents of our story. It has already been seen that Gelsomina was intrusted with certain important keys of the prison. For this trust there had been sufficient motive with the wily guardians of the jail, who had made their calculations on her serving their particular orders, without ever suspecting that she was capable of so far listening to the promptings of a generous temper, as might induce her to use them in any manner prejudicial to their own views. The service to which they were now to be applied, proved that the keepers, one of whom was her own father, had not fully known how to estimate the powers of the innocent and simple.

Provided with the keys in question, Gelsomina took a lamp, and passed upward from the mezzinino in which she dwelt, to the first floor of the edifice, instead of descending to its court. Door was opened after door, and many a gloomy corridor was passed by the gentle girl, with the confidence of one who knew her motive to be good. She soon crossed the Bridge of Sighs, fearless of interruption in that unfrequented gallery, and entered the palace. Here she made her way to a door that opened on the common and public vomitories of the structure. Moving with sufficient care to make impunity from detection sure, she extinguished the light, and applied the key. At the next instant she was on the vast and gloomy stairway. It required but a moment to descend it, and to reach the covered gallery which surrounded the court. A halberdier was within a few feet of her. He looked at the unknown female with interest; but as it was not his business to question those who issued from the building, nothing was said. Gelsomina walked on. A half-repenting, but vindictive being, was dropping an accusation in the lion's mouth. Gelsomina stopped involuntarily, until the secret accuser had done his treacherous work and departed. Then, when she was about to proceed, she saw that the halberdier, at the head of the Giant's stairway, was smiling at her indecision like one accustomed to such scenes.

"Is there danger in quitting the palace?" she asked of the rough mountaineer.

"Corpo di Bacco! There might have been, an hour since, Bella Donna; but the rioters are muzzled, and at their prayers!"

Gelsomina hesitated no longer. She descended the well-known flight, down which the head of Faliero had rolled, and was soon beneath the arch of the gate. Here the timid and unpractised girl again stopped, for she could not venture into the square without assuring herself, like a deer about to quit its cover, of the tranquillity of the place, into which she was to enter.

The agents of the police had been too much alarmed by the rising of the fishermen, not to call their usual ingenuity and finesse into play, the moment the disturbance was appeased. Money had been given to the mountebanks and ballad-singers to induce them to reappear, and groups of hirelings, some in masks and others without concealment, were ostentatiously assembled in different parts of the piazza. In short, those usual expedients were resorted to, which are constantly used to restore the confidence of a people, in those countries in which civilization is so new, that they are not yet considered sufficiently ad-

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vanced to be the guardians of their own security. There are few artifices so shallow that many will not be their dupes. The idler, the curious, the really discontented, the factious, the designing, with a suitable mixture of the unthinking and of those who only live for the pleasure of the passing hour, a class not the least insignificant for numbers, had lent themselves to the views of the police; and when Gelsomina was ready to enter the Piazzetta, she found both the squares partially filled. A few excited fishermen clustered about the doors of the cathedral, like bees swarming before their hive; but, on that side, there was no very visible cause of alarm. Unaccustomed as she was to scenes like that before her, the first glance assured the gentle girl of the real privacy which so singularly distinguishes the solitude of a crowd. Gathering her simple mantle more closely about her form, and settling her mask with care, she moved with a swift step into the centre of the piazza.

We shall not detail the progress of our heroine, as, avoiding the commonplace gallantry that assailed and offended her ear, she went her way, on her errand of kindness. Young, active, and impelled by her intentions, the square was soon passed, and she reached the place of San Nico. Here was one of the landings of the public gondolas. But, at the moment, there was no boat in waiting, for curiosity or fear had induced the men to quit their usual stand. Gelsomina had ascended the bridge, and was on the crown of its arch, when a gondolier came sweeping lazily in from the direction of the Grand Canal. Her hesitation and doubting manner attracted his attention, and the man made the customary sign, which conveyed the offer of his services. As she was nearly a stranger to the streets of Venice, labyrinths, that offer greater embarrassment to the uninitiated, than perhaps the passages of any other town of its size, she gladly availed herself of the offer. To descend to the steps, to leap into the boat, to utter the word "Rialto," and to conceal herself in the pavilion, was the business of a minute. The boat was instantly in motion.

Gelsomina now believed herself secure of effecting her purpose, since there was little to apprehend from the knowledge, or the designs, of a common boatman. He could not know her object, and it was his interest to carry her, in safety, to the place she had commanded. But so important was success, that she could not feel secure of attaining it, while it was still unaccomplished. She soon summoned sufficient resolution to look out at the palaces and boats as they were passing, and she felt the refreshing air of the canal revive her courage. Then turning, with sensitive distrust, to examine the countenance of the gondolier, she saw that his features were concealed beneath a mask that was so well designed, as not to be perceptible to a casual observer by moonlight.

Though it was common, on occasions, for the servants of the great, it was not usual for the public gondoliers, to be disguised. The circumstance itself was one justly to excite slight apprehension, though, on second thoughts, Gelsomina saw no more in it, than a return from some expedition of pleasure, or some serenade, perhaps, in which the caution of a lover had compelled his followers to resort to this species of concealment.

"Shall I put you on the public quay, signora," demanded the gondolier, "or shall I see you to the gate of your own palace?"

The heart of Gelsomina beat high. She liked the tone of the voice, though it was necessarily smothered by the mask, but she was little accustomed to act in the affairs of others, and less still in any of so great interest, that the sounds caused her to tremble like one less worthily employed.

"Dost thou know the palace of a certain Don Camillo Monforte, a lord of Calabria, who dwells, here, in Venice?" she asked, after a moment's pause. The gondolier sensibly betrayed surprise, by the manner in which he started at the question.

"Would you be rowed there, lady?"

"If thou art certain of knowing the pallazzo."

The water stirred, and the gondola glided between high walls. Gelsomina knew, by the sound, that they were in one of the smaller canals, and she augured well of the boatman's knowledge of the town. They soon stopped by the side of a water-gate, and the man appeared on the step, holding an arm, to aid her in ascending, after the manner of people

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of his craft. Gelsomina bade him wait her return, and proceeded.

There was a marked derangement in the household of Don Camillo, that one more practised than our heroine would have noted. The servants seemed undecided, in the manner of performing the most ordinary duties; their looks wandered distrustfully from one to the other, and when their half-frightened visitor entered the vestibule, though all arose, none advanced to meet her. A female masked was not a rare sight, in Venice, for few of that sex went upon the canals, without using the customary means of concealment; but it would seem, by their hesitating manner, that the menials of Don Camillo did not view the entrance of her, who now appeared, with the usual indifference.

"I am in the dwelling of the Duke of St. Agata, a signor of Calabria?" demanded Gelsomina, who saw the necessity of being firm.

"Signora, si——"

"Is your lord in the palace?"

"Signora, he is—and he is not. What beautiful lady shall I tell him does him this honor?"

"If he be not at home, it will not be necessary to tell him anything. If he is, I could wish to see him."

The domestics, of whom there were several, put their heads together, and seemed to dispute on the propriety of receiving the visit. At this instant, a gondolier, in a flowered jacket, entered the vestibule. Gelsomina took courage at his good-natured eye and frank manner.

"Do you serve Don Camillo Monforte?" she asked, as he passed her, on his way to the canal.

"With the oar, Bellissima Donna," answered Gino, touching his cap, though scarce looking aside at the question.

"And could he be told that a female wishes earnestly to speak to him in private?—A female."

"Santa Maria! Bella Donna, there is no end to females who come on these errands, in Venice. You might better pay a visit to the statue of San Teodore, in the piazza, than see my master at this moment; the stone will give you the better reception."

"And this he commands you to tell all of my sex who come!"

"Diavolo!—Lady, you are particular in your questions. Perhaps my master might, on a strait, receive one of the sex, I could name, but on the honor of a gondolier, he is not the most gallant cavalier of Venice, just at this moment."

"If there is one to whom he would pay this deference, you are bold for a servitor. How know you I am not that one?"

Gino started. He examined the figure of the applicant, and lifting his cap he bowed.

"Lady, I do not know anything about it," he said; "you may be his highness the Doge, or the ambassador of the emperor. I pretend to know nothing in Venice, of late——"

The words of Gino were cut short by a tap on the shoulder from the public gondolier, who had hastily entered the vestibule. The man whispered in the ear of Don Camillo's servitor.

"This is not a moment to refuse any," he said—"Let the stranger go up."

Gino hesitated no longer. With the decision of a favored menial he pushed the groom of the chambers aside, and offered to conduct Gelsomina, himself, to the presence of his master. As they ascended the stairs, three of the inferior servants disappeared.

The palace of Don Camillo had an air of more than Venetian gloom. The rooms were dimly lighted, many of the walls had been stripped of the most precious of their pictures, and, in other respects a jealous eye might have detected evidence of a secret intention on the part of its owner, not to make a permanent residence of the dwelling. But these were particulars that Gelsomina did not note, as she followed Gino through the apartments, into the more private parts of the building. Here the gondolier unlocked a door, and regarding his companion with an air, half-doubting, half-respectful, he made a sign for her to enter.

"My master commonly receives the ladies, here," he said. "Enter, excellenza, while I run to tell him of his happiness."

Gelsomina did not hesitate, though she felt a violent throb at her heart, when she heard the key turning in the lock, behind her. She was in an ante-chamber, and, inferring from the light which shone through the door of an adjoining room, that she was to proceed, she went on. No sooner had she

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entered the little closet, than she found herself alone with one of her own sex.

"Annina!" burst from the lips of the unpractised prison-girl, under the impulse of surprise.

"Gelsomina!—The simple, quiet, whispering, modest Gelsomina!" returned the other.

The words of Annina admitted but of one construction. Wounded, like the bruised sensitive plant, Gelsomina withdrew her mask, for air, actually gasping for breath, between offended pride and wonder.

"Thou here!" she added, scarce knowing what she uttered.

"Thou here!" repeated Annina, with such a laugh as escapes the degraded when they believe the innocent reduced to their own level.

"Nay—I come on an errand of pity."

"Santa Maria! we are both here with the same end!"

"Annina! I know not what thou would'st say!—This is surely the palace of Don Camillo Monforte!—A noble Neapolitan, who urges claims to the honors of the senate?"

"The gayest—the handsomest—the richest, and the most inconstant cavalier in Venice! Hadst thou been here a thousand times, thou could'st not be better informed!"

Gelsomina listened in horror. Her artful cousin, who knew her character to the full extent that vice can comprehend innocence, watched her colorless cheek and contracting eye, with secret triumph. At the first movement, she had believed all that she insinuated, but second thoughts, and a view of the visible distress of the frightened girl, gave a new direction to her suspicions.

"But I tell thee nothing new," she quickly added. "I only regret thou should'st find me, where, no doubt, you expect to meet the Duca di Sant' Agata himself."

"Annina!—This from thee!"

"Thou surely didst not come to this palace to seek thy cousin!"

Gelsomina had long been familiar with grief, but until this moment she had never felt the deep humiliation of shame. Tears started from her eyes, and she sank back into a seat, in utter inability to stand.

"I would not distress thee out of bearing," added the artful daughter of the wine-seller. "But that we are both in the closet of the gayest cavalier of Venice, is beyond dispute."

"I have told thee that pity for another brought me hither."

"Pity for Don Camillo?"

"For a noble lady—a young, a virtuous, and a beautiful wife—a daughter of the Tiepolo—of the Tiepolo, Annina!"

"Why should a lady of the Tiepolo employ a girl of the public prisons!"

"Why!—because there has been injustice by those up above. There has been a tumult among the fishermen—and the lady with her governess was liberated by the rioters—and his highness spoke to them in the great court—and the Dalmatians were on the quay—and the prison was a refuge for ladies of their quality, in a moment of so great terror—and the Holy Church itself has blessed their love——"

Gelsomina could utter no more, but breathless with the wish to vindicate herself, and wounded to the soul by the strange embarrassment of her situation, she sobbed aloud. Incoherent as had been her language, she had said enough to remove every doubt from the mind of Annina. Privy to the secret marriage, to the rising of the fishermen, and to the departure of the ladies, from the convent on a distant island, where they had been carried on quitting their own palace, the preceding night, and whither she had been compelled to conduct Don Camillo, who had ascertained the departure of those he sought without discovering their destination, the daughter of the wine-seller readily comprehended, not only the errand of her cousin, but the precise situation of the fugitives.

"And thou believest this fiction, Gelsomina?" she said, affecting pity for her cousin's credulity. "The characters of thy pretended daughter of Tiepolo and her governess are no secrets to those who frequent the piazza of San Marco."

"Hadst thou seen the beauty and innocence of the lady, Annina, thou would'st not say this!"

"Blessed San Teodoro! What is more beautiful than vice! 'Tis the cheapest artifice of the devil to deceive frail sinners. This thou hast heard of thy confessor, Gelsomina, or he is of much lighter discourse than mine."

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"But why should a woman of this life enter the prisons?"

"They had good reasons to dread the Dalmatians, no doubt. But, it is in my power to tell thee more, of these thou hast entertained, with such peril to thine own reputation. There are women in Venice who discredit their sex in various ways, and these, more particularly she who calls herself Florinda, is notorious for her agency in robbing St. Mark of his revenue. She has received a largess from the Neapolitan, of wines grown on his Calabrian mountains, and wishing to tamper with my honesty, she offered the liquor to me, expecting one like me to forget my duty, and to aid her in deceiving the republic."

"Can this be true, Annina?"

"Why should I deceive thee? Are we not sisters' children, and though affairs on the Lido keep me much from thy company, is not the love between us natural? I complained to the authorities, and the liquors were seized, and the pretended noble ladies were obliged to hide themselves this very day. 'Tis thought they wish to flee the city, with their profligate Neapolitan. Driven to take shelter, they have sent thee to acquaint him with their hiding-place, in order that he may come to their aid."

"And why art thou here, Annina?"

"I marvel that thou didst not put the question sooner. Gino, the gondolier of Don Camillo, has long been an unfavorable suitor of mine, and when this Florinda complained of my having, what every honest girl in Venice should do, exposed her fraud to the authorities, he advised his master to seize me, partly in revenge, and partly with the vain hope of making me retract the complaint I have made. Thou hast heard of the bold violence of these cavaliers when thwarted in their wills."

Annina then related the manner of her seizure, with sufficient exactitude, merely concealing those facts that it was not her interest to reveal.

"But there is a lady of the Tiepolo, Annina!"

"As sure as there are cousins like ourselves. Santa Madre di Dio! that women so treacherous and so bold should have met one of thy innocence! It would have been better had they fallen in with me, who am too ignorant for their cunning, blessed St. Anna knows!—but who has not to learn their true characters."

"They did speak of thee, Annina!"

The glance, which the wine-seller's daughter threw at her cousin, was such as the treacherous serpent casts at the bird; but preserving her self-possession, she added—

"Not to my favor; it would sicken me to hear words of favor from such as they!"

"They are not thy friends, Annina."

"Perhaps they told thee, child, that I was in the employment of the council?"

"Indeed they did."

"No wonder. Your dishonest people can never believe one can do an act of pure conscience. But, here comes the Neapolitan.—Note the libertine, Gelsomina, and thou wilt feel for him the same disgust as I!"

The door opened and Don Camillo Monforte entered. There was an appearance of distrust in his manner, which proved that he did not expect to meet his bride. Gelsomina arose, and, though bewildered by the tale of her cousin, and her own previous impressions, she stood resembling a meek statue of modesty, awaiting his approach. The Neapolitan was evidently struck by her beauty, and the simplicity of her air, but his brow was fixed, like that of a man who had steeled his feelings against deceit.

"Thou would'st see me?" he said.

"I had that wish, noble signor, but—Annina——"

"Seeing another, thy mind hath changed."

"Signor, it has."

Don Camillo looked at her earnestly, and with manly regret.

"Thou art young for thy vocation—here is gold. Retire as thou camest.—But hold—dost thou know this Annina?"

"She is my mother's sister's daughter, noble Duca."

"Per Diana! a worthy sisterhood! Depart together, for I have no need of either. But mark me," and as he spoke, Don Camillo took Annina by the arm, and led her aside, when he continued with a low but menacing voice—"Thou seest I am to be feared, as well as thy Councils. Thou canst not cross the threshold of thy father without my knowledge. If prudent, thou wilt teach thy tongue

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discretion. Do as thou wilt, I fear thee not; but remember, prudence."

Annina made a humble reverence, as if in acknowledgment of the wisdom of his advice, and taking the arm of her half-unconscious cousin, she again courtesied, and hurried from the room. As the presence of their master in his closet was known to them, none of the menials presumed to stop those who issued from the privileged room. Gelsomina, who was even more impatient than her wily companion to escape from a place she believed polluted, was nearly breathless when she reached the gondola. Its owner was in waiting on the steps, and in a moment the boat whirled away from a spot, which both of those it contained were, though for reasons so very different, glad to quit.

Gelsomina had forgotten her mask, in her hurry; and the gondola was no sooner in the great canal than she put her face at the window of the pavilion in quest of the evening air. The rays of the moon fell upon her guileless eye, and a cheek that was now glowing, partly with offended pride, and partly with joy at her escape from a situation she felt to be so degrading. Her forehead was touched with a finger, and turning she saw the gondolier making a sign of caution. He then slowly lifted his mask.

"Carlo!" had half burst from her lips, but another sign suppressed the cry.

Gelsomina withdrew her head, and, after her beating heart had ceased to throb, she bowed her face and murmured thanksgivings, at finding herself, at such a moment, under the protection of one who possessed all her confidence.

The gondolier asked no orders for his direction. The boat moved on, taking the direction of the port, which appeared perfectly natural to the two females.

Annina supposed it was returning to the square, the place she would have sought had she been alone, and Gelsomina, who believed that he whom she called Carlo toiled regularly as a gondolier for support, fancied, of course, that he was taking her to her ordinary residence.

But though the innocent can endure the scorn of the world, it is hard indeed to be suspected by those they love. All that Annina had told her of the character of Don Camillo and his associates came gradually across the mind of the gentle Gelsomina, and she felt the blood creeping to her temples, as she saw the construction her lover might put on her conduct. A dozen times did the artless girl satisfy herself with saying inwardly, "he knows me and will believe the best," and as often did her feelings prompt her to tell the truth. Suspense is far more painful, at such moments, than even vindication, which, in itself, is a humiliating duty to the virtuous. Pretending a desire to breathe the air, she left her cousin in the canopy. Annina was not sorry to be alone, for she had need to reflect on all the windings of the sinuous path on which she had entered.

Gelsomina succeeded in passing the pavilion, and in gaining the side of the gondolier.

"Carlo!" she said, observing that he continued to row in silence.

"Gelsomina!"

"Thou hast not questioned me!"

"I know thy treacherous cousin, and can believe thou art her dupe. The moment to learn the truth will come."

"Thou didst not know me, Carlo, when I called thee from the bridge?"

"I did not—any fair that would occupy my time was welcome."

"Why dost thou call Annina treacherous?"

"Because Venice does not hold a more wily heart, or a falser tongue."

Gelsomina remembered the warning of Donna Florinda. Possessed of the advantage of blood, and that reliance which the inexperienced always place in the integrity of their friends, until exposure comes to destroy the illusion, Annina had found it easy to persuade her cousin of the unworthiness of her guests. But here was one who had all her sympathies, who openly denounced Annina herself. In such a dilemma the bewildered girl did what nature and her feelings suggested. She recounted, in a low but rapid voice, the incidents of the evening, and Annina's construction of the conduct of the females whom she had left behind in the prison.

Jacopo listened so intently that his oar dragged in the water.

"Enough," he said, when Gelsomina, blushing with her own earnestness to stand exculpated in his eyes, had done; "I under-

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stand it all. Distrust thy cousin, for the senate itself is not more false."

The pretended Carlo spoke cautiously, but in a firm voice. Gelsomina took his meaning, though wondering at what she heard, and returned to Annina within. The gondola proceeded, as if nothing had occurred.

CHAPTER XXV.

Enough.
I could be merry now; Hubert, I love thee;
Well, I'll not say what I intend for thee;
Remember.—*King John.*

JACOPO was deeply practised in the windings of Venetian deceit. He knew how unceasingly the eyes of the Councils, through their agents, were on the movements of those in whom they took an interest, and he was far from feeling all the advantage circumstances had seemingly thrown in his way. Annina was certainly in his power, and it was not possible that she had yet communicated the intelligence, derived from Gelsomina, to any of her employers. But a gesture, a look in passing the prison-gates, the appearance of duress, or an exclamation, might give the alarm to some one of the thousand spies of the police. The disposal of Annina's person in some place of safety, therefore, became the first and the most material act. To return to the palace of Don Camillo, would be to go into the midst of the hirelings of the senate; and although the Neapolitan, relying on his rank and influence, had preferred this step, when little importance was attached to the detention of the girl, and when all she knew had been revealed, the case was altered, now that she might become the connecting link in the information necessary to enable the officers to find the fugitives.

The gondola moved on. Palace after palace was passed, and the impatient Annina thrust her head from a window to note its progress. They came among the shipping of the port, and her uneasiness sensibly increased. Making a pretext similar to that of Gelsomina, the wine-seller's daughter quitted the pavilion, to steal to the side of the gondolier.

"I would be landed quickly at the water-gate of the Doge's palace," she said, slapping a piece of silver into the hand of the boatman.

"You shall be served, Bella Donna. But —Diamine! I marvel that a girl of thy wit should not scent the treasures in yonder felucca!"

"Dost thou mean the Sorrentine?"

"What other padrone brings as well-flavored liquors within the Lido? Quiet thy impatience to land, daughter of honest old Maso, and traffic with the padrone, for the comfort of us of the canals."

"How! Thou knowest me then?"

"To be the pretty wine-seller of the Lido. Corpo di Bacco! Thou art as well known as the sea-wall itself, to us gondoliers."

"Why art thou masked? thou canst not be Luigi!"

"It is little matter whether I am called Luigi, or Enrico, or Giorgio—I am thy customer, and honor the shortest hair of thy eyebrows. Thou knowest, Annina, that the young patricians have their frolics, and they swear us gondoliers to keep secret till all danger of detection is over; were any impertinent eyes following me, I might be questioned as to the manner of having passed the earlier hours."

"Methinks it would be better to have given thee gold, and to have sent thee at once to thy home."

"To be followed like a denounced Hebrew to my door. When I have confounded my boat with a thousand others, it will be time to uncover. Wilt thou to the Bella Sorrentina?"

"Nay, 'tis not necessary to ask, since thou takest the direction of thine own will!"

The gondolier laughed and nodded his head, as if he would give his companion to understand that he was master of her secret wishes. Annina was hesitating in what manner she should make him change his purpose, when the gondola touched the felucca's side.

"We will go up and speak to the padrone," whispered Jacopo.

"It is of no avail; he is without liquors."

"Trust him not—I know the man and his pretences."

"Thou forgettest my cousin."

"She is an innocent and unsuspecting child."

Jacopo lifted Annina, as he spoke, on the deck of the Bella Sorrentina, in a manner be-

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tween gallantry and force, and leaped after her. Without pausing, or suffering her to rally her thoughts, he led her to the cabin-stairs, which she descended, wondering at his conduct, but determined not to betray her own secret wrongs on the customs to a stranger.

Stefano Milano was asleep, in a sail, on deck. A touch aroused him, and a sign gave him to understand that the imaginary Roderigo stood before him.

"A thousand pardons, signor," said the gaping mariner; "is the freight come?"

"In part only. I have brought thee a certain Annina Torti, the daughter of old Tommaso Torti, a wine-seller of the Lido."

"Santa Madre! does the senate think it necessary to send one like her from the city in secret?"

"It does—and it lays great stress on her detention. I have come hither with her, without suspicion of my object, and she has been prevailed on to enter thy cabin, under a pretence of some secret dealings in wines. According to our former understanding, it will be thy business to make sure of her presence."

"That is easily done," returned Stefano, stepping forward and closing the cabin-door, which he secured by a bolt. "She is alone, now, with the image of our Lady, and a better occasion to repeat her aves cannot offer."

"This is well, if thou canst keep her so. It is now time to lift thy anchors, and to go beyond the tiers of the vessels with the felucca."

"Signor, there wants but five minutes for that duty, since we are ready."

"Then perform it, in all speed, for much depends on the management of this delicate duty. I will be with thee, anon. Harkee, Master Stefano; take heed of thy prisoner, for the senate makes great account of her security."

The Calabrian made such a gesture, as one initiated uses, when he would express a confidence in his own shrewdness. While the pretended Roderigo re-entered his gondola, Stefano began to awaken his people. As the gondola entered the canal of San Marco, the sails of the felucca fell, and the low Calabrian vessel stole along the tiers toward the clear water beyond.

The boat quickly touched the steps of the water-gate of the palace. Gelsomina entered the arch, and glided up the Giant's Stairway, the route by which she had quitted the palace. The halberdier was the same that watched as she went out. He spoke to her, in gallantry, but offered no impediment to her entrance.

"Haste, noble ladies, hasten for the love of the Holy Virgin!" exclaimed Gelsomina, as she burst into the room in which Donna Violetta and her companion awaited her appearance. "I have endangered your liberty by my weakness, and there is not a moment to lose. Follow while you may, nor stop to whisper even a prayer."

"Thou art hurried and breathless," returned Donna Florinda; "hast thou seen the Duca di Sant' Agata?"

"Nay, question me not, but follow, noble dames."

Gelsomina seized the lamp, and casting a glance that appealed strongly to her visitors for tacit compliance, she led the way into the corridors. It is scarcely necessary to say that she was followed.

The prison was left in safety, the Bridge of Sighs was passed, for it will be remembered that Gelsomina was still mistress of the keys, and the party went silently by the great stairs of the palace into the open gallery. No obstruction was offered to their progress, and they all descended to the court, with the quiet demeanor of females who went out on their ordinary affairs.

Jacopo awaited at the water-gate. In less than a minute he was driving his gondola across the port, following the course of the felucca, whose white sail was visible in the moonlight, now bellying in the breeze, and now flapping as the mariners checked her speed. Gelsomina watched their progress for a moment in breathless interest, and then she crossed the bridge of the quay, and entered the prison by its public gate.

"Hast thou made sure of the old Maso's daughter?" demanded Jacopo, on reaching the deck of the Bella Sorrentina again.

"She is like shifting ballast, Master Roderigo; first on one side of the cabin, and then on the other; but you see the bolt is undrawn."

"'Tis well; here is more of thy freight—

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thou hast the proper passes for the galley of the guard?"

"All is in excellent order, signor; when was Stefano Milano out of rule in a matter of haste? Diamine! let the breeze come, and though the senate should wish us back again, it might send all its spirri after us in vain."

"Excellent Stefano! fill thy sails, then, for our masters watch your movements, and set a value on your diligence."

While the Calabrian complied, Jacopo assisted the females to come up out of the gondola. In a moment the heavy yards swung off, wing and wing, and the bubbles that appeared to glance past the sides of the Bella Sorrentina, denoted her speed.

"Thou hast noble ladies in thy passengers," said Jacopo to the padrone, when the latter was released from the active duties of getting his vessel in motion; "and though policy requires that they should quit the city for a time, thou wilt gain favor by consulting their pleasures."

"Doubt me not, Master Roderigo; but thou forgettest that I have not yet received my sailing instructions; a felucca without a course, is as badly off as an owl in the sun."

"That in good time; there will come an officer of the republic to settle this matter with thee. I would not have these noble ladies know, that one like Annina is to be their fellow-passenger, while they are near the port; for they might complain of disrespect. Thou understandest, Stefano?"

"Cospetto! am I a fool? a blunderer? if so, why does the senate employ me? the girl is out of hearing, and there let her stay. As long as the noble dames are willing to breathe the night-air, they shall have none of her company."

"No fear of them. The dwellers of the land little relish the pent air of thy cabin. Thou wilt go without the Lido, Stefano, and await my coming. If thou should'st not see me before the hour of one, bear away for the port of Ancona, where thou wilt get further tidings."

Stefano, who had often previously received his instructions from the imaginary Roderigo, nodded assent, and they parted. It is scarcely necessary to add, that the fugitives had been fully instructed in the conduct they were to maintain.

The gondola of Jacopo never flew faster, than he now urged it towards the land. In the constant passage of the boats, the movements of one were not likely to be remarked; and he found, when he reached the quay of the square, that his passing and repassing had not been observed. He boldly unmasked and landed. It was near the hour when he had given Don Camillo a rendezvous in the Piazza, and he walked slowly up the smaller square, towards the appointed place of meeting.

Jacopo, as has been seen in an earlier chapter, had a practice of walking near the columns of granite in the first hours of the night. It was the vulgar impression that he waited there for custom in his bloody calling, as men of more innocent lives take their stands in places of mark. When seen on his customary stand, he was avoided by all who were chary of their character, or scrupulous of appearances.

The persecuted and yet singularly tolerated Bravo was slowly pacing the flags on his way to the appointed place, unwilling to anticipate the moment, when a laquais thrust a paper into his hand, and disappeared as fast as legs would carry him. It has been seen that Jacopo could not read, for that was an age when men of his class were studiously kept in ignorance. He turned to the first passenger who had the appearance of being likely to satisfy his wishes, and desired him to do the office of interpreter.

He had addressed an honest shopkeeper of a distant quarter. The man took the scroll, and good-naturedly commenced reading its contents aloud. "I am called away, and cannot meet thee, Jacopo!" At the name of Jacopo, the tradesman dropped the paper and fled.

The Bravo walked slowly back again, towards the quay, ruminating on the awkward accident which had crossed his plans; his elbow was touched, and a masker confronted him when he turned.

"Thou art Jacopo Frontoni?" said the stranger.

"None else."

"Thou hast a hand to serve an employer, faithfully?"

"I keep my faith."

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"'Tis well,—thou wilt find a hundred sequins in this sack."

"Whose life is set against this gold?" asked Jacopo, in an undertone.

"Don Camillo Monforte."

"Don Camillo Monforte!"

"The same; dost thou know the rich noble?"

"You have well described him, signor. He would pay his barber this for letting blood."

"Do thy job thoroughly and the price shall be doubled."

"I want the security of a name. I know you not, signor."

The stranger looked cautiously around him, and raising his mask for an instant, he showed the countenance of Giacomo Gradenigo.

"Is the pledge sufficient?"

"Signor, it is. When must this deed be done?"

"This night.—Nay, this hour, even."

"Shall I strike a noble of his rank in his palace—in his very pleasures?"

"Come hither, Jacopo, and thou shalt know more. Hast thou a mask?"

The Bravo signified his assent.

"Then keep thy face behind a cloud, for it is not in favor here, and seek thy boat. I will join thee."

The young patrician, whose form was effectually concealed by his attire, quitted his companion, with a view of rejoining him anew, where his person should not be known. Jacopo forced his boat from among the crowd at the quay, and having entered the open space, between the tiers, he lay on his oar, well knowing that he was watched, and that he would soon be followed. His conjecture was right, for in a few moments a gondola pulled swiftly to the side of his own, and two men inmasks passed from the strange boat into that of the Bravo, without speaking.

"To the Lido," said a voice, which Jacopo knew to be that of his new employer.

He was obeyed, the boat of Giacomo Gradenigo following at a little distance. When they were without the tiers, and consequently beyond the danger of being overheard, the two passengers came out of the pavilion, and made a sign to the Bravo to cease rowing.

"Thou wilt accept the service, Jacopo Frontoni?" demanded the profligate heir of the old senator.

"Shall I strike the noble in his pleasures, signor?"

"It is not necessary. We have found means to lure him from his palace, and he is now in thy power, with no other hope than that which may come from his single arm and courage. Wilt thou take the service?"

"Gladly, signor.—It is my humor to encounter the brave."

"Thou wilt be gratified. The Neapolitan has thwarted me in my—shall I call it love, Hosea; or hast thou a better name?"

"Just Daniel! Signor Giacomo, you have no respect for reputations and surety! I see no necessity for a home thrust, Master Jacopo; but a smart wound, that may put matrimony out of the head of the Duca for a time at least, and penitence into its place, would be better——"

"Strike to the heart!" interrupted Giacomo. "It is the certainty of thy blow which has caused me to seek thee."

"This is usurious vengeance, Signor Giacomo," returned the less resolute Jew. "'Twill be more than sufficient for our purposes, if we cause the Neapolitan to keep house for a month."

"Send him to his grave. Harkee, Jacopo, a hundred for thy blow—a second for insurance of its depth—a third if the body shall be buried in the Orfano, so that the water will never give back the secret."

"If the two first must be performed, the last will be prudent caution," muttered the Jew, who was a wary villain, and who greatly preferred such secondary expedients, as might lighten the load on his conscience. "You will not trust, young signor, to a smart wound?"

"Not a sequin. 'Twill be heating the fancy of the girl with hopes and pity. Dost thou accept the terms, Jacopo?"

"I do."

"Then row to the Lido. Among the graves of Hosea's people—why dost thou pull at my skirts, Jew? would'st thou hope to deceive a man of this character with a flimsy lie?—among the graves of Hosea's people thou wilt meet Don Camillo within the hour. He is deluded by a pretended letter from the lady of our common pursuit, and will be

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alone, in the hopes of flight; I trust to thee to hasten the latter, so far as the Neapolitan is concerned. Dost take my meaning?"

"Signor, it is plain."

"'Tis enough. Thou knowest me, and canst take the steps necessary for thy reward, as thou shalt serve me. Hosea, our affair is ended."

Giacomo Gradenigo made a sign for his gondola to approach, and dropping a sack which contained the retainer in this bloody business, he passed into it, with the indifference of one who had been accustomed to consider such means of attaining his objects lawful. Not so Hosea—he was a rogue, rather than a villain. The preservation of his money, with the temptation of a large sum which had been promised him, by both father and son, in the event of the latter's success with Violetta, were irresistible temptations to one who had lived contemned by those around him, and he found his solace for the ruthless attempt in the acquisition of those means of enjoyment which are sought equally by Christian and Jew. Still his blood curdled, at the extremity to which Giacomo would push the affair, and he lingered to utter a parting word to the Bravo.

"Thou art said to carry a sure stiletto, honest Jacopo," he whispered. "A hand of thy practice must know how to maim, as well as to slay.—Strike the Neapolitan smartly, but spare his life. Even the bearer of a public dagger like thine, may not fare the worse, at the coming of Shiloh, for having been tender of his strength, on occasion."

"Thou forgettest the gold, Hosea!"

"Father Abraham! what a memory am I getting, in my years! Thou sayest truth, mindful Jacopo; the gold shall be forthcoming, in any event—always provided that the affair is so managed as to leave my young friend a successful adventurer with the heiress."

Jacopo made an impatient gesture, for at that moment he saw a gondolier pulling rapidly towards a private part of the Lido. The Hebrew joined his companion, and the boat of the Bravo darted ahead. It was not long ere it lay on the strand of the Lido. The steps of Jacopo were rapid as he moved towards those proscribed graves, among which he had made his confession to the very man he was now sent to slay.

"Art thou sent to meet me?" demanded one, who started from behind a rising in the sands, but who took the precaution to bare his rapier as he appeared.

"Signor Duca, I am," returned the Bravo, unmasking.

"Jacopo!—This is even better than I had hoped! Hast thou tidings from my bride?"

"Follow, Don Camillo, and you shall quickly meet her."

Words were unnecessary to persuade, when there was such a promise. They were both in the gondola of Jacopo, and on their way to one of the passages through the Lido, which conducts to the gulf, before the Bravo commenced his explanation. This, however, was quickly made, not forgetting the design of Giacomo Gradenigo on the life of his auditor.

The felucca, which had been previously provided with the necessary pass, by the agents of the police, itself, had quitted the port under easy sail, by the very inlet through which the gondola made its way into the Adriatic. The water was smooth, the breeze fresh from the land, and in short all things were favorable to the fugitives. Donna Violetta and her governess were leaning against a mast, watching with impatient eyes the distant domes and the midnight beauty of Venice. Occasionally, strains of music came to their ears from the canals, and then a touch of natural melancholy crossed the feelings of the former, as she feared they might be the last sounds of that nature she should ever hear from her native town. But unalloyed pleasure drove every regret from her mind when Don Camillo leaped from the gondola, and folded her in triumph to his heart.

There was little difficulty in persuading Stefano Milano to abandon, forever, the service of the senate, for that of his feudal lord. The promises and commands of the latter were sufficient of themselves to reconcile him to the change, and all were convinced there was no time to lose. The felucca soon spread her canvas to the wind, and slid away from the beach. Jacopo permitted his gondola to be towed a league to sea, before he prepared to re-enter it.

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"You will steer for Ancona, Signor Don Camillo," said the Bravo, leaning on the felucca's side, still unwilling to depart, "and throw yourself, at once, under the protection of the Cardinal Secretary. If Stefano keep the sea, he may chance meet the galleys of the senate."

"Distrust us not—but thou, my excellent Jacopo—what wilt thou become, in their hands?"

"Fear not for me, signor. God disposes of all, as he sees fit. I have told your eccellenza that I cannot yet quit Venice. If fortune favor me, I may still see your stout Castle of Sant' Agata."

"And none will be more welcome, within its secure walls; I have much fear for thee, Jacopo!"

"Signor, think not of it. I am used to danger—and to misery—and to hopelessness. I have known a pleasure, this night, in witnessing the happiness of two young hearts, that God, in His anger, has long denied me. Lady, the Saints keep you, and God, who is above all, shield you from harm!"

He kissed the hand of Donna Violetta, who, half ignorant still of his services, listened to his words, in wonder.

"Don Camillo Monforte," he continued, "distrust Venice to your dying day. Let no promises—no hopes—no desire of increasing your honors, or your riches, ever tempt you to put yourself in her power. None know the falsehood of the state, better than I, and with my parting words I warn you to be wary!"

"Thou speakest as if we were to meet no more, worthy Jacopo!"

The Bravo turned, and the action brought his features to the moon. There was a melancholy smile, in which deep satisfaction at the success of the lovers was mingled with serious forebodings for himself.

"We are certain only of the past," he said, in a low voice.

Touching the hand of Don Camillo, he kissed his own and leaped hastily into his gondola. The fast was thrown loose, and the felucca glided away, leaving this extraordinary being, alone, in the waters. The Neapolitan ran to the taffrail, and the last he saw of Jacopo, the Bravo was rowing leisurely back towards that scene of violence and deception, from which he himself was so glad to have escaped.

CHAPTER XXVI.

My limbs are bowed, though not with toil,
But rusted with a vile repose,
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
And mine hath been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are bann'd and barred—forbidden fare.
—*Prisoner of Chillon.*

When the day dawned on the following morning, the square of St. Mark was empty. The priests still chanted their prayers for the dead, near the body of old Antonio, and a few fishermen still lingered in and near the cathedral, but half persuaded of the manner in which their companion had come to his end. But, as was usual at that hour of the day, the city appeared tranquil, for though a slight alarm had passed through the canals, at the movement of the rioters, it had subsided in that specious and distrustful quiet, which is, more or less, the unavoidable consequence of a system that is not substantially based on the willing support of the mass.

Jacopo was again in the attic of the Doge's palace, accompanied by the gentle Gelsomina. As they threaded the windings of the building, he recounted to the eager ear of his companion, all the details connected with the escape of the lovers; omitting, as a matter of prudence, the attempt of Giacomo Gradenigo on the life of Don Camillo. The unpractised and single-hearted girl heard him in breathless attention, the color of her cheek, and the changeful eye, betraying the force of her sympathies, at each turn in their hazardous adventure.

"And dost thou think they can yet escape from those up above?" murmured Gelsomina, for few in Venice would trust their voices, by putting such a question aloud. "Thou knowest the republic hath at all times its galleys in the Adriatic!"

"We have had thought of that, and the Calabrian is advised to steer for the mole of Ancona. Once within the States of the Church, the influence of Don Camillo and the rights of his noble wife will protect them. Is there a place here, whence we can look out upon the sea?"

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Gelsomina led the Bravo into an empty room of the attic which commanded a view of the port, the Lido, and the waste of water beyond. The breeze came in strong currents over the roofs of the town, and causing the masts of the port to rock, it lighted on the Lagunes, without the tiers of the shipping. From this point to the barrier of sand, it was apparent, by the stooping sails and the struggles of the gondoliers who pulled toward the quay, that the air was swift. Without the Lido itself, the element was shadowed and fitful, while farther in the distance, the troubled waters, with their crests of foam, sufficiently proved its power.

"Santa Maria be praised!" exclaimed Jacopo, when his understanding eye had run over the near and distant view—"they are already far down the coast, and with a wind like this they cannot fail to reach their haven in a few hours.—Let us go to the cell."

Gelsomina smiled when he assured her of the safety of the fugitives, but her look saddened when he changed the discourse. Without reply, however, she did as he desired, and in a very few moments they were standing by the side of the prisoner's pallet. The latter did not appear to observe their entrance, and Jacopo was obliged to announce himself.

"Father!" he said, with that melancholy pathos which always crept into his voice when he addressed the old man, "it is I."

The prisoner turned, and though evidently much enfeebled since the last visit, a wan smile gleamed on his wasted features.

"And thy mother, boy?" he asked, so eagerly as to cause Gelsomina to turn hastily aside.

"Happy, father—happy!"

"Happy without me?"

"She is ever with thee in spirit, father. She thinks of thee in her prayers. Thou hast a saint for an intercessor, in my mother—father."

"And thy good sister?"

"Happy too—doubt it not, father. They are both patient and resigned."

"The senate, boy?"

"Is the same: soulless, selfish, and pretending!" answered Jacopo sternly; then turning away his face, in bitterness of heart, though without permitting the words to be audible, he cursed them.

"The noble signori were deceived in believing me concerned in the attempt to rob their revenues," returned the patient old man; "one day they will see and acknowledge their error."

Jacopo made no answer, for, unlettered as he was, and curtailed of that knowledge which should be, and is, bestowed on all, by every paternal government, the natural strength of his mind had enabled him to understand, that a system, which on its face professed to be founded on the superior acquirements of a privileged few, would be the least likely to admit the fallacy of its theories, by confessing it could err.

"Thou dost the nobles injustice, son; they are illustrious patricians, and have no motive in oppressing one like me."

"None, father, but the necessity of maintaining the severity of the laws, which make them senators and you a prisoner."

"Nay, boy, I have known worthy gentlemen of the senate! There was the late Signor Tiepolo, who did me much favor in my youth. But for this false accusation, I might now have been one of the most thriving of my craft in Venice."

"Father, we will pray for the soul of the Tiepolo."

"Is the senator dead?"

"So says a gorgeous tomb in the Church of the Redentore."

"We must all die at last," whispered the old man, crossing himself. "Doge as well as patrician—patrician as well as gondolier.—Jaco——"

"Father!" exclaimed the Bravo so suddenly as to interrupt the coming word, then kneeling by the pallet of the prisoner he whispered in his ear, "thou forgettest there is reason why thou should'st not call me by that name. I have told thee, often, that if thus called, my visits must stop."

The prisoner looked bewildered, for the failing of nature rendered that obscure which was once so evident to his mind. After gazing long at his son his, eyes wandered between him and the wall, and he smiled childishly.

"Wilt thou look, good boy, if the spider is come back?"

Jacopo groaned, but he rose to comply.

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"I do not see it, father; the season is not yet warm."

"Not warm! my veins feel heated to bursting. Thou forgettest this is the attic, and that these are the leads, and then the sun—oh! the sun! The illustrious senators do not bethink them of the pain of passing the bleak winters below the canals, and the burning summers beneath hot metal."

"They think of nothing but their power," murmured Jacopo—"that which is wrongfully obtained, must be maintained by merciless injustice—but why should we speak of this, father; hast thou all thy body needs?"

"Air—son, air!—give me of that air, which God has made for the meanest living thing."

The Bravo rushed towards those fissures in the venerable but polluted pile, he had already striven to open, and with frantic force he endeavored to widen them with his hands. The material resisted, though blood flowed from the ends of his fingers, in the desperate effort.

"The door, Gelsomina, open wide the door!" he cried, turning away from the spot, exhausted with his fruitless exertions.

"Nay, I do not suffer now, my child—it is when thou hast left me, and when I am alone with my own thoughts, when I see thy weeping mother and neglected sister, that I feel most the want of air—are we not in the fervid month of August, son?"

"Father, it is not yet June."

"I shall then have more heat to bear! God's will be done, and blessed Santa Maria, his mother undefiled, give me strength to endure it."

The eye of Jacopo gleamed with a wildness scarcely less frightful than the ghastly look of the old man, his chest heaved, his fingers were clenched, and his breathing was audible.

"No," he said, in a low, but in so determined a voice, as to prove how fiercely his resolution was set, "thou shalt not await their torments: arise, father, and go with me. The doors are open, the ways of the palace are known to me in the darkest night, and the keys are at hand. I will find means to conceal thee until dark, and we will quit the accursed republic forever."

Hope gleamed in the eye of the old captive, as he listened to this frantic proposal, but distrust of the means immediately altered its expression.

"Thou forgettest those up above, son."

"I think only of One truly above, father."

"And this girl—how canst thou hope to deceive her?"

"She will take thy place—she is with us in heart, and will lend herself to a seeming violence. I do not promise for thee idly, kindest Gelsomina?"

The frightened girl, who had never before witnessed so plain evidence of desperation in her companion, had sunk upon an article of furniture, speechless. The look of the prisoner changed from one to the other, and he made an effort to rise, but debility caused him to fall backward, and not till then, did Jacopo perceive the impracticability, on many accounts, of what, in a moment of excitement, he had proposed. A long silence followed. The hard breathing of Jacopo gradually subsided, and the expression of his face changed to its customary settled and collected look.

"Father," he said, "I must quit thee; our misery draws near a close."

"Thou wilt come to me soon again?"

"If the saints permit—thy blessing, father."

The old man folded his hands above the head of Jacopo, and murmured a prayer. When this pious duty was performed, both the Bravo and Gelsomina busied themselves a little time in contributing to the bodily comforts of the prisoner, and then they departed in company.

Jacopo appeared unwilling to quit the vicinity of the cell. A melancholy presentiment seemed to possess his mind that these stolen visits were soon to cease. After a little delay, however, they descended to the apartments below, and as Jacopo desired to quit the palace, without re-entering the prisons, Gelsomina prepared to let him out by the principal corridor.

"Thou art sadder than common, Carlo," she observed, watching with feminine assiduity his averted eye. "Methinks thou should'st rejoice in the fortunes of the Neapolitan, and of the lady of the Tiepolo."

"That escape is like a gleam of sunshine in a wintry day. Good girl—but we are observed! why is yon spy on our movements?"

"'Tis a menial of the palace; they con-

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stantly cross us in this part of the building: come hither, if thou art weary. The room is little used, and we may again look out upon the sea."

Jacopo followed his mild conductor into one of the neglected closets of the second floor. where, in truth, he was glad to catch a glimpse of the state of things in the piazza, before he left the palace. His first look was at the water, which was still rolling southward before the gale from the Alps. Satisfied with this prospect, he bent his eye beneath. At the instant, an officer of the republic issued from the palace gate, preceded by a trumpeter, as was usual, when there was occasion to make public proclamation of the Senate's will. Gelsomina opened the casement, and both leaned forward to listen. When the little procession had reached the front of the cathedral, the trumpet sounded, and the voice of the officer was heard.

"Whereas many wicked and ruthless assassinations have of late been committed on the persons of divers good citizens of Venice," —he proclaimed—"the senate, in its fatherly care of all whom it is charged to protect, has found reason to resort to extraordinary means of preventing the repetition of crimes so contrary to the laws of God and the security of society. The Illustrious Ten therefore offer, thus publicly, a reward of one hundred sequins to him who shall discover the perpetrator of any of these most horrible assassinations; and, whereas, during the past night, the body of a certain Antonio, a well-known fisherman, and a worthy citizen, much esteemed by the patricians, has been found in the Lagunes, and, whereas, there is but too much reason to believe that he has come to his death by the hands of a certain Jacopo Frontoni, who has the reputation of a common bravo, but who has been long watched, in vain, by the authorities, with the hope of detecting him in the commission of some one of the aforesaid horrible assassinations; now, all good and honest citizens of the republic are enjoined to assist the authorities in seizing the person of the said Jacopo Frontoni, even though he should take sanctuary: for Venice can no longer endure the presence of one of his sanguinary habits, and for the encouragement of the same, the senate, in its paternal care, offers the reward of three hundred sequins." The usual words of prayer and sovereignty closed the proclamation.

As it was not usual for those who ruled so much in the dark, to make their intentions public, all near listened with wonder and awe to the novel procedure. Some trembled lest the mysterious and much-dreaded power was about to exhibit itself; while most found means of making their admiration of the fatherly interest of their rulers audible."

None heard the words of the officer with more feeling than Gelsomina. She bent her body far from the window, in order that not a syllable should escape her.

"Dids't thou hear, Carlo?" demanded the eager girl, as she drew back her head: "they proclaim, at last, money for the monster who has committed so many murders!"

Jacopo laughed; but to the ears of his startled companion the sounds were unnatural.

"The patricians are just, and what they do is right," he said. "They are of illustrious birth, and cannot err! They will do their duty."

"But here is no other duty than that they owe to God, and to the people."

"I have heard of the duty of the people, but little is said of the senate's.

"Nay, Carlo, we will not refuse them credit when in truth they seek to keep the citizens from harm. This Jacopo is a monster, detested by all, and his bloody deeds have too long been a reproach to Venice. Thou hearest that the patricians are not niggard of their gold, when there is hope of his being taken.—Listen! they proclaim again?"

The trumpet sounded, and the proclamation was repeated between the granite columns of the Piazzetta, and quite near to the window occupied by Gelsomina and her unmoved companion.

"Why dost thou mask, Carlo?" she asked, when the officer had done; "it is not usual to be disguised, in the palace, at this hour."

"They will believe it the Doge, blushing to be an auditor of his own liberal justice, or they may mistake me for one of the Three itself."

"They go by tha quay to the arsenal; thence they will take boat, as is customary, for the Rialto."

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"Thereby giving this redoubtable Jacopo timely notice to secrete himself? Your judges up above are mysterious when they should be open, and open when they should be secret. I must quit thee, Gelsomina—go, then, back to the room of thy father, and leave me to pass out by the court of the palace."

"It may not be, Carlo—thou knowest the permission of the authorities—I have exceeded—why should I wish to conceal it from thee—but, it was not permitted to thee to enter at this hour."

"And thou hast had the courage to transgress the leave, for my sake, Gelsomina?"

The abashed girl hung her head, and the color which glowed about her temples was like the rosy light of her own Italy.

"Thou would'st have it so," she said.

"A thousand thanks, dearest, kindest, truest Gelsomina; but doubt not my being able to leave the palace unseen. The danger was in entering. They who go forth do it with the air of having authority."

"None pass the halberdiers masked by day, Carlo, but they who have the secret word."

The Bravo appeared struck with this truth, and there was great embarrassment expressed in his manner. The terms of his admittance were so well understood to himself, that he distrusted the expediency of attempting to get upon the quays by the prison, the way he had entered, since he had little doubt that his retreat would be intercepted by those who kept the outer gate, and who were probably, by this time, in the secret of his true character. It now appeared that egress by the other route was equally hazardous. He had not been surprised so much by the substance of the proclamation, as by the publicity the senate had seen fit to give to its policy,—and he had heard himself denounced, with a severe pang, it is true, but without terror. Still he had so many means of disguise, and the practice of personal concealment was so general in Venice, that he had entertained no great distrust of the result until he now found himself in this awkward dilemma. Gelsomina read his indecision in his eye, and regretted that she should have caused him so much uneasiness.

"It is not so bad as thou seemest to think, Carlo," she observed; "they have permitted thee to visit thy father at stated hours, and the permission is a proof that the senate is not without pity. Now that I, to oblige thy wishes, have forgotten one of their injunctions, they will not be so hard of heart as to visit the fault as a crime."

Jacopo gazed at her with pity, for well did he understand how little she knew of the real nature and wily policy of the state.

"It is time that we should part," he said, "lest thy innocence should be made to pay the price of my mistake. I am now near the public corridor, and must trust to my fortune to gain the quay."

Gelsomina hung upon his arm, unwilling to trust him to his own guidance in that fearful building.

"It will not do, Carlo; thou wilt stumble on a soldier, and thy fault will be known; perhaps they will refuse to let thee come again; perhaps altogether shut the door of thy poor father's cell."

Jacopo made a gesture for her to lead the way, and followed. With a beating but still lightened heart, Gelsomina glided along the passages, carefully locking each door, as of wont, behind her, when she had passed through it. At length they reached the well-known Bridge of Sighs. The anxious girl went on with a lighter step, when she found herself approaching her own abode, for she was busy in planning the means of concealing her companion in her father's rooms, should there be hazard in his passing out of the prison during the day.

"But a single minute, Carlo," she whispered, applying the key to the door which opened into the latter building—the lock yielded, but the hinges refused to turn. Gelsomina paled as she added—"They have drawn the bolts within!"

"No matter; I will go down by the court of the palace, and boldly pass the halberdier unmasked."

Gelsomina, after all, saw but little risk of his being known by the mercenaries who served the Doge, and, anxious to relieve him from so awkward a position, she flew back to the other end of the gallery. Another key was applied to the door by which they had just entered, with the same result. Gelsomina staggered back, and sought support against the wall.

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"We can neither return nor proceed!" she exclaimed, frightened she knew not why.

"I see it all," answered Jacopo, "we are prisoners on the fatal bridge."

As he spoke, the Bravo calmly removed his mask and showed the countenance of a man whose resolution was at its height.

"Santa Madre di Dio! what can it mean?"

"That we have passed here once too often, love. The council is tender of these visits."

The bolts of both doors grated, and the hinges creaked at the same instant. An officer of the inquisition entered armed, and bearing manacles. Gelsomina shrieked, but Jacopo moved not a limb or muscle while he was fettered and chained.

"I too!" cried his frantic companion. "I am the most guilty—bind me—cast me into a cell, but let poor Carlo go."

"Carlo!" echoed an officer, laughing unfeelingly.

"Is it such a crime to seek a father in his prison? They knew of his visits—they permitted them—he has only mistaken the hour."

"Girl, dost thou know for whom thou pleadest?"

"For the kindest heart—the most faithful son in Venice! Oh! if ye had seen him weep, as I have done, over the sufferings of the old captive—if ye had seen his very form shivering in agony, ye would have pity on him!"

"Listen;" returned the officer, raising a finger for attention.

The trumpeter sounded on the bridge of St. Mark, immediately beneath them, and proclamation was again made, offering gold for the arrest of the Bravo.

"'Tis the officer of the republic, bidding for the head of one who carries a common stiletto." cried the half-breathless Gelsomina, who little heeded the ceremony at that instant; "he merits his fate."

"Then why resist it?"

"Ye speak without meaning!"

"Doting girl, this is Jacopo Frontoni!"

Gelsomina would have disbelieved her ears, but for the anguished expression of Jacopo's eye. The horrible truth burst upon her mind, and she fell lifeless. At that moment the Bravo was hurried from the bridge.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Let us lift up the curtain, and observe
What passes in that chamber.—Rogers.

There were many rumors, uttered in the fearful and secret manner which characterized the manners of the town, in the streets of Venice that day. Hundreds passed near granite columns, as if they expected to see the Bravo occupying his accustomed stand, in audacious defiance of the proclamation, for so long and so mysteriously had he been permitted to appear in public, that men had difficulty in persuading themselves he would quit his habits so easily. It is needless to say that the vague expectation was disappointed. Much was also said, vauntingly, in behalf of the republic's justice, for the humbled are bold enough in praising their superiors; and he, who had been dumb for years, on subjects of a public nature, now found his voice like a fearless freeman.

But the day passed away without any new occurrence to call the citizens from their pursuits. The prayers for the dead were continued, with little intermission, and masses were said before the altars of half the churches for the repose of the fisherman's soul. His comrades, a little distrustful, but greatly gratified, watched the ceremonies with jealousy and exultation singularly blended. Ere the night set in again, they were among the most obedient of those the oligarchy habitually trod upon; for such is the effect of this species of domination, that it acquires a power to appease, by its flattery, the very discontents created by its injustice. Such is the human mind: a factitious but deeply-seated sentiment of respect is created by the habit of submission, which gives the subject of its influence a feeling of atonement when he who has long played the superior comes down from his stilts, and confesses the community of human frailties!

The square of St. Mark filled at the usual hour, the patricians deserted the Broglio as of wont, and the gayeties of the place were again uppermost before the clock had struck the second hour of the night. Gondolas, filled with noble dames, appeared on the canals; the blinds of the palaces were raised for the admission of the sea-breeze; and music began to be heard in the port, on the bridges, and under the balconies of the fair.

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The course of society was not to be arrested merely because the wronged were unavenged, or the innocent suffered.

There stood, then, on the grand canal, as there stand now, many palaces of scarcely less than royal magnificence. The reader has had occasion to become acquainted with one or two of these splendid edifices, and it has now become our duty to convey him, in imagination, to another.

The peculiarity of construction, which is a consequence of the watery site of Venice, gives the same general character to all the superior dwellings of that remarkable town. The house to which the thread of the narrative now leads us, had its water-gate, its vestibule, its massive marble stairs, its inner court, its magnificent suites of rooms above, its pictures, its lustres, and its floors of precious stones embedded in composition, like all those which we have already found it necessary to describe.

The hour was ten, according to our own manner of computing time. A small, but lovely family picture presented itself, deep within the walls of the patrician abode, to which we have alluded. There was a father, a gentleman who had scarcely attained the middle age, with an eye in which spirit, intelligence, philanthropy, and, at that moment, paternal fondness were equally glowing. He tossed in his arms, with parental pride, a laughing urchin of some three or four years, who rioted in the amusement which brought him, and the author of his being, for a time, seemingly on a level. A fair Venetian dame, with golden locks and glowing cheeks, such as Titian loved to paint her sex, reclined on a couch near by, following the movements of both, with the joint feelings of mother and wife, and laughing in pure sympathy with the noisy merriment of her young hope. A girl, who was the youthful image of herself, with tresses that fell to her waist, romped with a crowing infant, whose age was so tender as scarcely to admit the uncertain evidence of its intelligence. Such was the scene as the clock of the piazza told the hour. Struck with the sound, the father set down the boy and consulted his watch.

"Dost thou use thy gondola to-night, love?" he demanded.

"With thee, Paolo?"

"Not with me, dearest; I have affairs which will employ me until twelve!"

"Nay, thou art given to cast me off when thy caprices are wayward."

"Say not so. I have named to-night for an interview with my agent, and I know thy maternal heart too well to doubt thy being willing to spare me for that time, while I look to the interests of these dear ones."

The Donna Giulietta rang for her mantle and attendants. The crowing infant and the noisy boy were dismissed to their beds, while the lady and the eldest child descended to the gondola. Donna Giulietta was not permitted to go unattended to her boat, for this was a family in which the inclinations had fortunately seconded the ordinary calculations of interest, when the nuptial knot was tied. Her husband kissed her hand fondly, as he assisted her into the gondola, and the boat had glided some distance from the palace, ere he quitted the moist stones of the water-gate.

"Hast thou prepared the cabinet for my friends?" demanded the Signor Soranzo, for it was the same senator who had been in company with the Doge, when the latter went to meet the fishermen.

"Signor, si."

"And the quiet, and the lights—as ordered?"

"Eccellenza, all will be done."

"Thou hast placed seats for six?—we shall be six."

"Signor, there are six armed chairs."

"'Tis well: when the first of my friends arrive I will join them."

"Eccellenza, there are already two cavaliers in masks, within."

The Signor Soranzo started, again consulted his watch, and hastily went toward a distant, and very silent, part of the palace. He reached a small door unattended, and, closing it, found himself at once in the presence of those who evidently awaited his appearance.

"A thousand pardons, signori," cried the master of the house; "this is novel duty to me, at least—I know not what may be your honorable experience—and the time stole upon me unmarked. I pray for grace, Messires; future diligence shall repair the present neglect."

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Both the visitors were older men than their host, and it was quite evident by their hardened visages they were of much longer practice in the world. His excuses were received with courtesy, and, for a little time, the discourse was entirely of usage and convention.

"We are in secret here, signor?" asked one of the guests, after some little time had been wasted in this manner.

"As the tomb. None enter here unbidden, but my wife, and she has, this moment, taken boat, for better enjoyment of the evening."

"The world gives you credit, Signor Soranzo, for a happy ménage. I hope you have duly considered the necessity of shutting the door, even against the Donna Giulietta, to-night?"

"Doubt me not, signor; the affairs of St. Mark are paramount."

"I feel myself thrice happy, signori, that in drawing a lot for the Secret Council, my good fortune hath given me so excellent colleagues. Believe me, I have discharged this awful trust, in my day, in less agreeable company."

This flattering speech, which the wily old senator had made regularly to all with whom chance had associated him in the Inquisition, during a long life, was well received, and it was returned with equal compliments.

"It would appear that the worthy Signor Alessandro Gradenigo was one of our predecessors," he continued, looking at some papers; for though the actual Three were unknown, at the time being, to all but a few secretaries and officers of the state, Venetian policy transmitted their names to their successors, as a matter of course,—"a noble gentleman, and one of great devotion to the state!"

The others assented, like men accustomed to speak with caution.

"We were about to have entered on our duties at a troublesome moment, signori," observed another. "But it would seem that this tumult of the fishermen has already subsided. I understand the knaves had some reason for their distrust of the state!"

"It is an affair happily settled," answered the senior of the three, who was long practised in the expediency of forgetting all that policy required should cease to be remembered, after the object was attained. "The galleys must be manned, else would St. Mark quickly hang his head in shame."

The Signor Soranzo, who had received some previous instruction in his new duties, looked melancholy; but he, too, was merely the creature of a system.

"Is there matter of pressing import for our reflection?" he demanded.

"Signori, there is every reason to believe that the state has just sustained a grievous loss. Ye both well know the heiress of Tiepolo, by reputation at least, though her retired manner of life may have kept you from her company."

"Donna Giulietta is eloquent in praise of her beauty," said the young husband.

"We had not a better fortune in Venice," rejoined the third inquisitor.

"Excellent in qualities, and better in riches, as she is, I fear we have lost her, signori! Don Camillo Monforte, whom God protect until we have no future use for his influence! had come near to prevail against us; but just as the state baffled his well-laid schemes, the lady has been thrown by hazard into the hands of the rioters, since which time there is no account of her movements!"

Paolo Soranzo secretly hoped she was in the arms of the Neapolitan.

"A secretary has communicated to me the disappearance of the Duca di Sant' Agata, also," observed the third,—"nor is the felucca, usually employed in distant and delicate missions, any longer at her anchors."

The two old men regarded each other, as if the truth was beginning to dawn upon their suspicions. They saw that the case was hopeless, and as theirs was altogether a practical duty, no time was lost in useless regrets.

"We have two affairs which press," observed the elder.—"The body of the old fisherman must be laid quietly in the earth, with as little risk of future tumult, as may be—and we have this notorious Jacopo to dispose of."

"The latter must first be taken," said the Signor Soranzo.

"That has been done already. Would you think it, Sirs? he was seized in the very palace of the Doge!"

"To the block with him, without delay!"

The old men again looked at each other, and it was quite apparent that, as both of them had been in previous councils, they had

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a secret intelligence, to which their companion was yet a stranger. There was also visible in their glances, something like a design to manage his feelings, before they came more openly to the graver practices of their duties.

"For the sake of blessed St. Mark, signori, let justice be done openly in this instance!" continued the unsuspecting member of the Three. "What pity can the bearer of a common stiletto claim? and what more lovely exercise of our authority than to make public an act of severe and much-required justice?"

The old senators bowed to this sentiment of their colleague, which was uttered with the fervor of young experience, and the frankness of an upright mind; for there is a conventional acquiescence in received morals, which is permitted, in semblance at least, to adorn the most tortuous.

"It may be well, Signor Soranzo, to do this homage to the right," returned the elder. "Here have been sundry charges found in different lions' mouths, against the Neapolitan, Signor Don Camillo Monforte. I leave it to your wisdom, my illustrious colleagues, to decide on their character."

"An excess of malice betrays its own origin," exclaimed the least-practised member of the Inquisition. "My life on it, signori, these accusations come of private spleen, and are unworthy of the state's attention. I have consorted much with the young lord of Sant' Agata, and a more worthy gentleman does not dwell among us."

"Still hath he designs on the hand of old Tiepolo's daughter!"

"Is it a crime in youth to seek beauty? He did great service to the lady, in her need, and that youth should feel these sympathies is nothing strange."

"Venice hath her sympathies, as well as the youngest of us all, signor."

"But Venice cannot wed the heiress!"

"True. St. Mark must be satisfied with playing the prudent father's part. You are yet young, Signor Soranzo, and the Donna Giulietta is of rare beauty! As life wears upon ye both, ye will see the fortunes of kingdoms, as well as families, differently. But we waste our breath uselessly in this matter, since our agents have not yet reported their success in the pursuit. The most pressing affair, just now, is the disposition of the Bravo. Hath his highness shown you the letter of the sovereign pontiff, in the question of the intercepted dispatches, signor?"

"He hath. A fair answer was returned by our predecessors, and it must rest there."

"We will then look freely into the matter of Jacopo Frontoni. There will be necessity of our assembling in the chamber of the Inquisition, that we may have the prisoner confronted to his accusers. 'Tis a grave trial, signori, and Venice would loose in men's estimation, were not the highest tribunal to take an interest in its decision."

"To the block with the villain!" again exclaimed the Signor Soranzo.

"He may haply meet with that fate, or even with the punishment of the wheel. A mature examination will enlighten us much on the course which policy may dictate."

"There can be but one policy when the protection of the lives of our citizens is in question. I have never before felt impatience to shorten the life of man, but in this trial I can scarce brook delay."

"Your honorable impatience shall be gratified, Signor Soranzo; for, foreseeing the urgency of the case, my colleague, the worthy senator, who is joined with us in this high duty, and myself, have already issued the commands necessary to that object. The hour is near, and we will repair to the chamber of the Inquisition in time to our duty."

The discourse then turned on subjects of a more general concern. This secret and extraordinary tribunal, which was obliged to confine its meetings to no particular place, which could decide on its decrees equally in the piazza or the palace, amidst the revelries of the masquerade, or before the altar; in the assemblies of the gay, or in their own closets, had of necessity much ordinary matter submitted to its inspection. As the chances of birth entered into its original composition,—and God hath not made all alike fit for so heartless a duty,—it sometimes happened, as in the present instance, that the more worldly of its members had to overcome the generous disposition of a colleague, before the action of the terrible machine could go on.

It is worthy of remark, that communities

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always establish a higher standard of justice and truth than is exercised by their individual members. The reason is not to be sought for, since nature hath left to all a perception of that right, which is abandoned only under the stronger impulses of personal temptation. We commend the virtue we cannot imitate. Thus it is that those countries, in which public opinion has most influence, are always of the purest public practice. It follows as a corollary from this proposition, that a representation should be as real as possible, for its tendency will be inevitably to elevate national morals. Miserable, indeed, is the condition of that people, whose maxims and measures of public policy are below the standard of its private integrity, for the fact not only proves it is not the master of its own destinies, but the still more dangerous truth, that the collective power is employed in the fatal service of undermining those very qualities which are necessary to virtue, and which have enough to do, at all times, in resisting the attacks of immediate selfishness. A strict legal representation of all its interests is far more necessary to a worldly than to a simple people, since responsibility, which is the essence of a free government, is more likely to keep the agents of a nation near to its own standard of virtue than any other means. The common opinion that a republic cannot exist, without an extraordinary degree of virtue in its citizens, is so flattering to our own actual condition, that we seldom take the trouble to inquire into its truth; but to us it seems quite apparent that effect is here mistaken for the cause. It is said, as the people are virtually masters in a republic, that the people ought to be virtuous to rule well. So far as this proposition is confined to degrees, it is just as true of a republic as of any other form of government. But kings do rule, and surely all have not been virtuous; and that aristocracies have ruled with the very minimum of that quality, the subject of our tale sufficiently shows. That, other things being equal, the citizens of a republic will have a higher standard of private virtue than the subjects of any other form of government, is true as an effect, we can readily believe, for responsibility to public opinion existing in all the branches of its administration, that conventional morality, which characterizes the common sentiment will be left to act on the mass, and will not be perverted into a terrible engine of corruption, as is the case when factitious institutions give a false direction to its influence.

The case before us was in proof of the truth of what has here been said. The Signor Soranzo was a man of great natural excellence of character, and the charities of his domestic circle had assisted in confirming his original dispositions. Like others of his rank and expectations, he had, from time to time made the history and polity of the self-styled republic his study, and the power of collective interests and specious necessities had made him admit sundry theories, which, presented in another form, he would have repulsed with indignation. Still the Signor Soranzo was far from understanding the full effects of that system which he was born to uphold. Even Venice paid that homage to public opinion, of which there has just been question, and held forth to the world but a false picture of her true state maxims. Still many of those which were too apparent to be concealed were difficult of acceptance with one whose mind was yet untainted with practice; and the young senator rather shut his eyes on their tendency, or, as he felt their influence in every interest which environed him, but that of poor, neglected, abstract virtue, whose rewards were so remote, he was fain to seek out some palliative, or some specious and indirect good as the excuse for his acquiescence.

In this state of mind the Signor Soranzo was unexpectedly admitted a member of the Council of Three. Often, in the day-dreams of his youth, had he contemplated the possession of this very irresponsible power as the consummation of his wishes. A thousand pictures of the good he would perform had crossed his brain, and it was only as he advanced in life, and came to have a nearer view of the wiles which beset the best intentioned, that he could bring himself to believe most of that which he meditated was impracticable. As it was, he entered into the council with doubts and misgivings. Had he lived in a later age, under his own system modified by the knowledge which has been a consequence of the art of printing, it

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is probable that the Signor Soranzo would have been a noble in opposition, now supporting with ardor some measure of public benevolence, and now yielding, gracefully, to the suggestions of a sterner policy, and always influenced by the positive advantages he was born to possess, though scarcely conscious himself he was not all he professed to be. The fault, however, was not so much that of the patrician as that of circumstances, which, by placing interest in opposition to duty, lures many a benevolent mind into still greater weaknesses.

The companions of the Signor Soranzo, however, had a more difficult task to prepare him for the duties of the statesman, which were so very different from those he was accustomed to perform as a man, than they had anticipated. They were like two trained elephants of the east, possessing themselves all the finer instincts and generous qualities of the noble animal, but disciplined by a force quite foreign to their natural condition into creatures of mere convention, placed one on each side of a younger brother, fresh from the plains, and whom it was their duty to teach new services for the trunk, new affections, and haply the manner in which to carry with dignity the howdah of a Rajah.

With many allusions of their policy, but with no direct intimation of their own intention, the seniors of the council continued the conversation until the hour for the meeting in the Doge's palace drew nigh. They then separated as privately as they had come together, in order that no vulgar eye might penetrate the mystery of their official character.

The most practised of the three appeared in an assembly of the patricians, which noble and beautiful dames graced with their presence, from which he disappeared in a manner to leave no clew to his motions. The other visited the death-bed of a friend, where he discoursed long and well with a friar of the immortality of the soul and the hopes of a Christian: when he departed, the godly man bestowing his blessing, and the family he left being loud and eloquent in his praise.

The Signor Sorenzo clung to the enjoyments of his own family circle until the last moment. The Donna Giulietta had returned, fresher and more lovely than ever, from the invigorating sea-breeze, and her soft voice, with the melodious laugh of his first born, the blooming, ringlet-covered girl described, still rang in his ears, when his gondolier landed him beneath the bridge of the Rialto. Here he masked, and, drawing his cloak about him, he moved with the current toward the square of St. Mark by means of the narrow streets. Once in the crowd there was little danger of impertinent observation. Disguise was so often useful to the oligarchy of Venice, as it was absolutely necessary to elude its despotism, and to render the town tolerable to the citizen. Paolo saw swarthy, bare-legged men of the Lagunes entering occasionally into the cathedral. He followed, and found himself standing near the dimly-lighted altar, at which masses were still saying for the soul of Antonio.

"This is one of thy fellows?" he asked of a fisherman, whose dark eye glittered in that light like the organ of a basilisk.

"Signor, he was—a more honest, or a more just man, did not cast his net in the gulf."

"He has fallen a victim to his craft?"

"Cospetto di Bacco! none know in what manner he came by his end. Some say St. Mark was impatient to see him in paradise, and some pretend he has fallen by the hand of a common bravo named Jacopo Frontoni."

"Why should a bravo take the life of one like this?"

"By having the goodness to answer your own question, signor, you will spare me some trouble. Why should he, sure enough? They say Jacopo is revengeful, and that shame and anger at his defeat in the late regatta by one old as this was the reason.

"Is he so jealous of his honor with the oar?"

"Diamine! I have seen the time when Jacopo would sooner die than lose a race; but that was before he carried a stiletto. Had he kept to his oar the thing might have happened,—but once known for the hired blow, it seems unreasonable he should set his heart so strongly on the prizes of the canals."

"May not the man have fallen into the Lagunes by accident?"

"No doubt, signor. This happens to some of us daily; but then we think it wiser to

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swim to the boat than to sink. Old Antonio had an arm in youth to carry him from the quay to the Lido."

"But he may have been struck in falling, and rendered unable to do himself this good office."

"There would be marks to show this, were it true, signor!"

"Would not Jacopo have used the stiletto?"

"Perhaps not, on one like Antonio. The gondola of the old man was found in the mouth of the Grand Canal, half a league from the body, and against the wind! we note these things, signor, for they are within our knowledge."

"A happy night to thee, fisherman."

"A most happy night, eccellenza!" said the laborer of the Lagunes, gratified with having so long occupied the attention of one he rightly believed so much his superior. The disguised senator passed on. He had no difficulty in quitting the cathedral unobserved, and he had his private means of entering the palace, without attracting any impertinent eye to his movements. Here he quickly joined his colleagues of the fearful tribunal.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.—*Job.*

THE manner in which the Council of Three held its more public meetings, if aught connected with that mysterious body could be called public, has already been seen. On the present occasion, there were the same robes, the same disguises, and the same officers of the inquisition, as in the scene related in a previous chapter. The only change was in the character of the judges, and in that of the accused. By a peculiar arrangement of the lamp, too, most of the light was thrown upon the spot it was intended the prisoner should occupy, while the side of the apartment on which the inquisitors sat, was left in a dimness that well accorded with their gloomy and secret duties. Previously to the opening of the door, by which the person to be examined was to appear, there was audible the clanking of chains, the certain evidence that the affair in hand was considered serious. The hinges turned, and the Bravo stood in the presence of those unknown men who were to decide on his fate.

As Jacopo had often been before the council, though not as a prisoner, he betrayed neither surprise nor alarm at the black aspect of all his eye beheld. His features were composed though pale, his limbs immovable, and his mien decent. When the little bustle of his entrance had subsided, there reigned a stillness in the room.

"Thou art called Jocopo Frontoni?" said the secretary, who acted as the mouth-piece of the Three on this occasion.

"I am."

"Thou art the son of a certain Ricardo Frontoni, a man well known as having been concerned in robbing the republic's customs, and who is thought to have been banished to the distant islands or to be otherwise punished?"

"Signor—or otherwise punished."

"Thou wert a gondolier in thy youth?"

"I was a gondolier."

"Thy mother is——"

"Dead;" said Jacopo, perceiving the other pause to examine his notes.

The depth of the tone in which this word was uttered, caused a silence, that the secretary did not interrupt, until he had thrown a glance backward at the judges.

"She was not accused of thy father's crime?"

"Had she been, signor, she is long since beyond the power of the republic."

"Shortly after thy father fell under the displeasure of the state, thou quittedst thy business of a gondolier?"

"Signor, I did."

"Thou art accused, Jacopo, of having laid aside the oar for the stiletto?"

"Signor, I am."

"For several years, the rumors of thy bloody deeds have been growing in Venice, until, of late, none have met with an untimely fate that the blow has not been attributed to thy hand?"

"This is too true, Signor Segretario—I would it were not!"

"The ears of his highness, and of the councils, have not been closed to these reports, but they have long attended to the

rumors with the earnestness which becomes a paternal and careful government. If they have suffered thee to go at large, it hath only been that there might be no hazard of sullying the ermine of justice with a premature and not sufficiently supported judgment."

Jacopo bent his head, but without speaking. A smile so wild and meaning, however, gleamed on his face at this declaration, that the permanent officer of the secret tribunal, he who served as its organ of communication, bowed nearly to the paper he held, as it might be to look deeper into his documents. Let not the reader turn back to this page in surprise, when he shall have reached the explanation of the tale, for mysticisms quite as palpable, if not of so ruthless a character, have been publicly acted by political bodies in his own times.

"There is now a specific and a frightful charge brought against thee, Jacopo Frontoni," continued the secretary; "and, in tenderness of the citizen's life, the dreaded council itself hath taken the matter in hand. Didst thou know a certain Antonio Vecchio, a fisherman here in our Lagunes?"

"Signor, I knew him well of late, and much regret that it was only of late."

"Thou knowest, too, that his body hath been found drowned in the bay."

Jacopo shuddered, signifying his assent merely by a sign. The effect of this tacit acknowledgment on the youngest of the three was apparent, for he turned to his companions, like one struck by the confession it implied. His colleagues made dignified inclinations in return, and the silent communication ceased.

"His death has excited discontent among his fellows, and its cause has become a serious subject of inquiry for the illustrious council."

"The death of the meanest man in Venice should call forth the care of the patricians, signor."

"Dost thou know, Jacopo, that thou art accused of being his murderer?"

"Signor, I do."

"It is said that thou camest among the gondoliers in the late regatta, and that, but for this aged fisherman, thou would'st have been winner of the prize?"

"In that rumor had not lied, signor."

"Thou dost not, then, deny the charge!" said the examiner, in evident surprise.

"It is certain that but for the fisherman I should have been the winner.

"And thou wished it, Jacopo?"

"Signor, greatly;" returned the accused, with a show of emotion that had not hitherto escaped him. "I was a man condemned of his fellows, and the oar had been my pride from childhood to that hour."

Another movement of the third inquisitor betrayed, equally, his interest and his surprise.

"Dost thou confess the crime?"

Jacopo smiled, but more in derision than with any other feeling.

"If the illustrious senators here present will unmask, I may answer that question, haply, with greater confidence," he said.

"Thy request is bold and out of rule. None know the persons of the patricians who preside over the destinies of the state. Dost thou confess the crime?"

The entrance of an officer, in some haste, prevented a reply. The man placed a written report in the hands of the inquisitor in red, and withdrew. After a short pause, the guards were ordered to retire with their prisoner.

"Great senators!" said Jacopo, advancing earnestly towards the table, as if he would seize the moment to urge what he was about to say—"Mercy! grant me your authority to visit one in the prisons, beneath the leads!—I have weighty reasons for the wish, and I pray you, as men and fathers, to grant it!"

The interest of the two, who were consulting apart on the new intelligence, prevented them from listening to what he urged. The other inquisitor, who was the Signor Soranzo, had drawn near the lamp, anxious to read the lineaments of one so notorious, and was gazing at his striking countenance. Touched by the pathos of his voice, and agreeably disappointed in the lineaments he studied, he took upon himself the power to grant the request.

"Humor his wish," he said to the halberdiers; "but have him in readiness to reappear."

Jacopo looked his gratitude, but fearful that the others might still interfere to prevent his wish, he hurried from the room.

The march of the little procession which proceeded from the chamber of the Inquisi-

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tion to the summer cells of its victims, was sadly characteristic of the place and the government.

It went through gloomy and secret corridors, that were hid from the vulgar eye, while thin partitions only separated it from the apartments of the Doge, which, like the specious aspect of the state, concealed the nakedness and misery within, by their gorgeousness and splendor! On reaching the attic, Jacopo stopped, and turned to his conductors.

"If you are beings of God's forming," he said, "take off these clanking chains, though it be but for a moment."

The keepers regarded each other in surprise, neither offering to do the charitable office.

"I go to visit, probably for the last time," continued the prisoner, "a bedridden—I may say—a dying father, who knows nothing of my situation,—will ye that he should see me thus?"

The appeal, which was made more with the voice and manner, than in the words, had its effect. A keeper removed the chains and bade him proceed. With a cautious tread, Jacopo advanced, and when the door was opened he entered the room alone, for none there had sufficient interest in an interview between a common Bravo and his father, to endure the glowing warmth of the place, the while. The door was closed after him, and the room became dark.

Notwithstanding his assumed firmness, Jacopo hesitated when he found himself so suddenly introduced to the silent misery of the forlorn captive. A hard breathing told him the situation of the pallet, but the walls, which were solid on the side of the corridor, effectually prevented the admission of light.

"Father!" said Jacopo, with gentleness.

He got no answer.

"Father!" he repeated in a stronger voice.

The breathing became more audible, and then the captive spoke.

"Holy Maria hears my prayers!" he said feebly. "God hath sent thee, son, to close my eyes!"

"Doth thy strength fail thee, father?"

"Greatly—my time is come—I had hoped to see the light of the day again; to bless thy dear mother and sister—God's will be done!"

"They pray for us both, father. They are beyond the power of the senate."

"Jacopo,—I do not understand thee!"

"My mother and sister are dead; they are saints in Heaven, father."

The old man groaned, for the tie of earth had not yet been entirely severed. Jacopo heard him murmuring a prayer, and he knelt by the side of his pallet.

"This is a sudden blow!" whispered the old man. "We depart together."

"They are long dead, father."

"Why hast thou not told me this before, Jacopo?"

"Hadst thou not sorrows enough without this?—now that thou art about to join them, it will be pleasant to know that they have so long been happy."

"And thou?—thou wilt be alone—give me thy hand,—poor Jacopo!"

The Bravo reached forth, and took the feeble member of his parent; it was clammy and cold.

"Jacopo," continued the captive, whose mind still sustained the body, "I have prayed thrice within the hour—once for my own soul—once for the peace of thy mother—lastly, for thee!"

"Bless thee, father!—bless thee!—I have need of prayer!"

"I have asked of God—favor in thy behalf. I have bethought me—of all thy love and care—of all thy devotion to my age and sufferings. When thou wert a child, Jacopo—tenderness for thee—tempted me to acts of weakness,—I trembled lest thy manhood might bring upon me—pain and repentance. Thou hast not known the yearnings—of a parent for his offspring—but thou hast well requited them. Kneel, Jacopo—that I may ask of God—once more to remember thee."

"I am at thy side, father."

The old man raised his feeble arms, and with a voice whose force appeared reviving, he pronounced a fervent and solemn benediction.

"The blessing of a dying parent will sweeten thy life—Jacopo," he added, after a pause, "and give peace to thy last moments."

"It will do the latter, father."

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A rude summons at the door interrupted them.

"Come forth, Jacopo," said a keeper;—"the Council seeks thee!"

Jacopo felt the convulsive start of his father, but he did not answer.

"Will they not leave thee—a few minutes longer?" whispered the old man—"I shall not keep thee long!"

The door opened, and a gleam from the lamp fell on the group in the cell. The keeper had the humanity to shut it again, leaving all in obscurity. The glance which Jacopo obtained, by that passing light, was the last look he had of his father's countenance. Death was fearfully on it, but the eyes were turned in unutterable affection on his own.

"The man is merciful—he will not shut thee out!" murmured the parent.

"They cannot leave thee to die alone, father!"

"Son, I am with my God—yet I would gladly have thee by my side!—Didst thou say—thy mother and thy sister were dead?"

"Dead!"

"Thy young sister, too?"

"Father, both. They are saints in Heaven."

The old man breathed thick, and there was silence. Jacopo felt a hand moving in the darkness, as if in quest of him. He aided the effort, and laid the member in reverence on his own head.

"Maria undefiled, and her son, who is God!—bless thee, Jacopo!" whispered a voice, that to the excited imagination of the kneeling Bravo, appeared to hover in the air. The solemn words were followed by a quivering sigh. Jacopo hid his face in the blanket, and prayed. After which there was deep quiet.

"Father!" he asked, trembling at his own smothered voice.

He was unanswered. Stretching out a hand, it touched the features of a corpse. With a firmness that had the quality of desperation, he again bowed his head, and uttered, fervently, a prayer for the dead.

When the door of the cell opened, Jacopo appeared to the keepers, with the dignity of air that belongs only to character, and which was heightened by the scene in which he had just been an actor. He raised his hands, and stood immovable while the manacles were replaced. This office done, they walked away together, in the direction of the secret chamber. It was not long ere all were again in their places, before the Council of Three.

"Jacopo Frontoni," resumed the secretary, "thou art suspected of being privy to another dark deed, that hath had place of late, within our city. Hast thou any knowledge of a noble Calabrian, who hath high claim to the senate's honors, and who hath long had his abode in Venice?"

"Signor, I have."

"Hast thou had aught of concern with him?"

"Signor, yes."

A movement of common interest made itself apparent among the auditors.

"Dost thou know where the Don Camillo Monforte is at present?"

Jacopo hesitated. He so well understood the means of intelligence possessed by the Council, that he doubted how far it might be prudent to deny his connection with the flight of the lovers. Besides, at that moment his mind was deeply impressed with a holy sentiment of truth.

"Canst thou say, why the young duca is not to be found in his palace?" repeated the secretary.

"Illustrissimo, he hath quitted Venice forever."

"How canst thou know this?—Would he make a confidant of a common Bravo?"

The smile which crossed the features of Jacopo was full of superiority; it caused the conscious agent of the Secret Tribunal to look closely at his papers, like one who felt its power.

"Art thou his confidant—I ask again?"

"Signor, in this, I am.—I have the assurance from the mouth of Don Camillo Monforte himself that he will not return."

"This is impossible, since it would involve a loss of all his fair hopes and illustrious fortunes."

"He consoled himself, signor, with the possession of the heiress of Tiepolo's love, and with her riches."

Again there was a movement among the Three, which all their practised restraint, and the conventional dignity of their mysterious functions, could not prevent.

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"Let the keepers withdraw," said the inquisitor of the scarlet robe. So soon as the prisoner was alone with the Three, and their permanent officer, the examination continued; the senators themselves, trusting to the effect produced by their masks, and some feints, speaking as occasion offered.

"This is important intelligence that thou hast communicated, Jacopo," continued he of the robe of flame. "It may yet redeem thy life, wert thou wise enough to turn it to account."

"What would your eccellenza at my hands? It is plain that the council know of the flight of Don Camillo, nor will I believe that eyes, which so seldom are closed, have not yet missed the daughter of the Tiepolo."

"Both are true, Jacopo; but what hast thou to say of the means? Remember, that as thou findest favor with the council, thine own fate will be decided."

The prisoner suffered another of those freezing gleams to cross his face, which invariably caused his examiners to bend their looks aside.

"The means of escape cannot be wanting to a bold lover, signor," he replied. "Don Camillo is rich, and might employ a thousand agents, had he need of them."

"Thou art equivocating; 'twill be the worse for thee, that thou triflest with the council—who are these agents?"

"He had a generous household, eccellenza; —many hardy gondoliers and servitors of all conditions."

"Of these we have nothing to learn. He hath escaped by other means—or art thou sure he hath escaped at all?"

"Signor, is he in Venice?"

"Nay, that we ask of thee. Here is an accusation, found in the lion's mouth, which charges thee with his assassination."

"And the Donna Violetta's too, eccellenza?"

"Of her, we have heard nothing. What answer dost thou make to the charge?"

"Signor, why should I betray my own secrets?"

"Ha! art thou equivocating and faithless? Remember that we have a prisoner beneath the leads who can extract the truth from thee."

Jacopo raised his form to such an altitude as one might fancy to express the mounting of a liberated spirit. Still his eye was sad, and spite of an effort to the contrary, his voice melancholy.

"Senators," he said, "your prisoner beneath the leads is free."

"How! thou art trifling, in thy despair!"

"I speak truth. The liberation, so long delayed, hath come at last!"

"Thy father——"

"Is dead," interrupted Jacopo, solemnly.

The two elder members of the council looked at each other, in surprise, while their junior colleague listened with the interest of one who was just entering on a novitiate of secret and embarrassing duties. The former consulted together, and then they communicated as much of their opinions to the Signor Soranzo as they deemed necessary to the occasion.

"Wilt thou consult thine own safety, Jacopo, and reveal all thou knowest of this affair of the Neapolitan?" continued the inquisitor, when his by-play was ended.

Jacopo betrayed no weakness at the menace implied by the words of the senator; but, after a moment's reflection, he answered with as much frankness as he could have used at the confessional.

"It is known to you, illustrious senator," he said, "that the state had a desire to match the heiress of Tiepolo to its own advantage; that she was beloved of the Neapolitan noble; and that, as is wont, between young and virtuous hearts, she returned his love, as became a maiden of her high condition and tender years. Is there anything extraordinary in the circumstance, that two of so illustrious hopes should struggle to prevent their own misery? signori, the night that old Antonio died, I was alone among the graves of the Lido, with many melancholy and bitter thoughts, and life had become a burden to me. Had the evil spirit which was then uppermost maintained its mastery, I might have died the death of a hopeless suicide. God sent Don Camillo Monforte to my succor—praised be the immaculate Maria and her blessed Son for the mercy! it was there I learned the wishes of the Neapolitan, and enlisted myself in his service. I swore to him, senators of Venice, to be true; to die in his cause should it be

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necessary, and to help him to his bride. This pledge have I redeemed. The happy lovers are now in the states of the Church, and under the puissant protection of the cardinal-secretary, Don Camillo's mother's brother."

"Fool! why didst thou this? Hadst thou no thought for thyself?"

"Eecellenza, but little; I thought more of finding a human bosom to pour out my sufferings to than of your high displeasure. I have not known so sweet a moment in years, as that in which I saw the lord of Sant' Agata fold his beautiful and weeping bride to his heart!"

The inquisitors were struck with the quiet enthusiasm of the Bravo, and surprise once more held them in suspense. At length, the elder of the three resumed the examination.

"Wilt thou impart the manner of this escape, Jacopo?" he demanded. "Remember thou hast still a life to redeem!"

"Signor, it is scarce worth the trouble,
But to do you pleasure, nothing shall be concealed."

Jacopo then recounted, in simple and undisguised terms, the entire means employed by Don Camillo in effecting his escape: his hopes, his disappointments, and his final success. In this narrative nothing was concealed, but the place in which the ladies had temporarily taken refuge, and the name of Gelsomina. Even the attempt of Giacomo Gradenigo on the life of the Neapolitan, and the agency of the Hebrew, were fully exposed. None listened to this explanation so intently as the young husband. Notwithstanding his public duties, his pulse quickened as the prisoner dwelt on the different chances of the lovers, and when their final union was proclaimed, he felt his heart bound with delight. On the other hand, his more practised colleagues heard the detail of the Bravo with politic coolness. The effect of all factitious systems is to render the feelings subservient to expediency. Convention and fiction take place of passion and truth, and like the Mussulman with his doctrine of predestination, there is no one more acquiescent in defeat than he who has obtained an advantage in the face of nature and justice; his resignation being, in common, as perfect as his previous arrogance was insupportable. The two old senators perceived at once, that Don Camillo, and his fair companion, were completely beyond the reach of their power, and they instantly admitted the wisdom of making a merit of necessity. Having no further occasion for Jacopo, they summoned the keepers, and dismissed him to his cell.

"It will be seemly to send letters of congratulation to the cardinal-secretary, on the union of his nephew with so rich an heiress of our city," said the inquisitor of the Ten, as the door closed on the retiring group. "So great an interest as that of the Neapolitan should be propitiated."

"But should he urge the state's resistance to his hopes?" returned the Signor Soranzo, in feeble objection to so bold a scheme.

"We will excuse it as the act of a former council. These misconceptions are the unavoidable consequences of the caprices of liberty, signor. The steed that ranges the plains, in the freedom of nature, cannot be held to perfect command like the dull beast that draws the car. This is the first of your sittings, in the Three, but experience will show you that, excellent as we are in system, we are not quite perfect in practice. This is a grave matter of the young Gradenigo, signori!"

"I have long known his unworthiness," returned his more aged colleague. "It is a thousand pities that so honorable and so noble a patrician should have produced so ignoble a child. But neither the state, nor the city, can tolerate assassination."

"Would it were less frequent!" exclaimed the Signor Soranzo, in perfect sincerity.

"Would it were, indeed! There are hints in our secret information which tend to confirm the charge of Jacopo, though long experience has taught us to put full faith in his reports."

"How—is Jacopo, then, an agent of the police?"

"Of that more at our leisure, Signor Soranzo. At present we must look to this attempt on the life of one protected by our laws."

The Three then entered into a serious discussion of the case of the two delinquents. Venice, like all despotic governments, had the merit of great efficiency in its criminal police, when it was disposed to exert it. Jus-

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tice was sure enough in those instances in which the interests of the government itself were not involved, or in which bribery could not well be used. As to the latter, through the jealousy of the state, and the constant agency of those who were removed from temptation, by being already in possession of a monopoly of benefits, it was by no means as frequent as in some other communities, in which the affluent were less interested. The Signor Soranzo had now a fair occasion for the exercise of his generous feelings. Though related to the house of Gradenigo, he was not backward in decrying the conduct of its heir. His first impulses were to make a terrible example of the accused, and to show the world that no station brought with it, in Venice, impunity for crime. From this view of the case, however, he was gradually enticed by his companions, who reminded him that the law commonly made a distinction between the intention and the execution of an offence. Driven from his first determination by the cooler heads of his colleagues, the young inquisitor next proposed that the case should be sent to the ordinary tribunals for judgment. Instances had not been wanting in which the aristocracy of Venice sacrificed one of its body to the seemliness of Justice; for when such cases were managed with discretion, they rather strengthened than weakened their ascendancy. But the present crime was known to be too common to permit so lavish an expenditure of their immunities, and the old inquisitors opposed the wish of their younger colleague with great plausibility, and with some show of reason. It was finally resolved that they should themselves decide on the case.

The next question was the degree of punishment. The wily senior of the Council began by proposing a banishment for a few months, for Giacomo Gradenigo was already obnoxious to the anger of the state, on more accounts than one. But this punishment was resisted, by the Signor Soranzo, with the ardor of an uncorrupted and generous mind. The latter gradually prevailed, his companions taking care that their compliance should have the air of a concession to his arguments. The result of all this management was that the heir of Gradenigo was condemned to ten years' retirement in the provinces, and Hosea to banishment for life. Should the reader be of opinion that strict justice was not meted out to the offenders, he should remember, that the Hebrew ought to be glad to have escaped as he did.

"We must not conceal this judgment, nor its motive," observed the Inquisitor of the Ten, when the affair was concluded. "The state is never a loser for letting its justice be known."

"Nor for its exercise, I should hope;" returned the Signor Soranzo. "As our affairs are ended for the night, is it your pleasures, signori, that we return to our palaces?"

"Nay, we have this matter of Jacopo."

"Him may we, now, surely, turn over to the ordinary tribunals!"

"As you may decide, signori; is this your pleasure?"

Both the others bowed assent, and the usual preparations were made for departure.

Ere the two seniors of the Council left the palace, however, they held a long and secret conference together. The result was a private order to the criminal judge, and then they returned, each to his own abode, like men who had the approbation of their own consciences.

On the other hand, the Signor Soranzo hastened to his own luxurious and happy dwelling. For the first time in his life he entered it with a distrust of himself. Without being conscious of the reason, he felt sad, for he had taken the first step in that tortuous and corrupting path, which eventually leads to the destruction of all those generous and noble sentiments, which can only flourish apart from the sophistry and fictions of selfishness. He would have rejoiced to have been as light of heart as at the moment he handed his fair-haired partner into the gondola that night; but his head had pressed the pillow for many hours before sleep drew a veil over the solemn trifling with the most serious of our duties, in which he had been an actor.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Art thou not guilty! No, indeed, I am not.
—ROGERS.

THE following morning brought the funeral of Antonio. The agents of the police took

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the precaution to circulate in the city, that the senate permitted this honor to the memory of the old fisherman, on account of his success in the regatta, and as some atonement for his unmerited and mysterious death. All the men of the Lagunes were assembled in the square at the appointed hour, in decent guise, flattered with the notice that their craft received, and more than half disposed to forget their former anger in the present favor. Thus easy is it for those who are elevated above their fellow-creatures by the accident of birth, or by the opinions of a factitious social organization, to repair the wrongs they do in deeds, by small concessions of their conventional superiority.

Masses were still chanted for the soul of old Antonio before the altar of St. Mark. Foremost among the priests was the good Carmelite, who had scarce known hunger or fatigue, in his pious desire to do the offices of the Church, in behalf of one whose fate he might be said to have witnessed. His zeal, however, in that moment of excitement passed unnoticed by all, but those whose business it was to suffer no unusual display of character, nor any unwonted circumstance, to have place, without attracting their suspicion. As the Carmelite finally withdrew from the altar, previously to the removal of the body, he felt the sleeve of his robe slightly drawn aside, and yielding to the impulse, he quickly found himself among the columns of that gloomy church, alone with a stranger.

"Father, thou hast shrived many a parting soul?" observed, rather than asked, the other.

"It is the duty of my holy office, son."

"The state will note thy services; there will be need of thee when the body of this fisherman is committed to the earth."

The monk shuddered, but making the sign of the cross, he bowed his pale face, in signification of his readiness to discharge the duty. At that moment the bearers lifted the body, and the procession issued upon the great square. First marched the usual lay underlings of the cathedral, who were followed by those who chanted the offices of the occasion. Among the latter the Carmelite hastened to take his station. Next came the corpse, without a coffin, for that is a luxury of the grave even now unknown to the Italians of old Antonio's degree. The body was clad in the holiday vestments of a fisherman, the hands and feet being naked. A cross lay on the breast; the gray hairs were blowing about in the air, and, in frightful adornment of the ghastliness of death, a bouquet of flowers was placed upon the mouth. The bier was rich in gilding and carving, another melancholy evidence of the lingering wishes and false direction of human vanity.

Next to this characteristic equipage of the dead walked a lad, whose brown cheek, half-naked body, and dark, roving eye, announced the grandson of the fisherman. Venice knew when to yield gracefully, and the boy was liberated, unconditionally, from the galleys, in pity, as it was whispered, for the untimely fate of his parent. There was the aspiring look, the dauntless spirit, and the rigid honesty of Antonio, in the bearing of the lad; but these qualities were now smothered by a natural grief; and, as in the case of him whose funeral escort he followed, something obscured by the rude chances of his lot. From time to time the bosom of the generous boy heaved, as they marched along the quay, taking the route of the arsenal; and there were moments that his lips quivered; grief threatening to overcome his manhood.

Still not a tear wetted his cheek, until the body disappeared from his view. Then nature triumphed, and straying from out the circle, he took a seat apart and wept, as one of his years and simplicity would be apt to weep, at finding himself a solitary wanderer in the wilderness of the world.

Thus terminated the incident of Antonio Vecchio, the fisherman, whose name soon ceased to be mentioned in that city of mysteries, except on the Lagunes, where the men of his craft long vaunted his merit with the net, and the manner in which he bore away the prize from the best oars of Venice. His descendant lived and toiled, like others of his condition, and we will here dismiss him, by saying, that he so far inherited the native qualities of his ancestor, that he forbore to appear, a few hours later, in the crowd, which curiosity and vengeance drew into the Piazzetta.

Father Anselmo took boat to return to the canals, and when he landed at the quay of the smaller square, it was with the hope that

he would now be permitted to seek those of whose fate he was still ignorant, but in whom he felt so deep an interest. Not so, however. The individual who had addressed him in the cathedral was, apparently, in waiting, and knowing the uselessness, as well as the danger of remonstrance, where the state was concerned, the Carmelite permitted himself to be conducted whither his guide pleased. They took a devious route, but it led them to the public prisons. Here the priest was shown into the keeper's apartment, where he was desired to wait a summons from his companion.

Our business now leads us to the cell of Jacopo. On quitting the presence of the Three, he had been remanded to his gloomy room, where he passed the night like others similarly situated. With the appearance of the dawn, the Bravo had been led before those who ostensibly discharged the duties of his judges. We say ostensibly, for justice never was yet pure under a system in which the governors have an interest in the least separated from that of the governed; for in all cases which involve the ascendency of the existing authorities, the instinct of self-preservation is as certain to bias their decision, as that of life is to cause man to shun danger. If such is the fact in countries of milder sway, the reader will easily believe in its existence in a state like that of Venice. As may have been anticipated, those who sat in judgment on Jacopo had their instructions, and the trial that he sustained was rather a concession to appearances than a homage to the laws. All the records were duly made, witnesses were examined, or said to be examined, and care was had to spread the rumor in the city, that the tribunals were at length occupied in deciding on the case of the extraordinary man, who had so long been permitted to exercise his bloody profession with impunity, even in the centre of the canals. During the morning, the credulous tradesmen were much engaged in recounting to each other the different flagrant deeds that, in the course of the last three or four years, had been imputed to his hand. One spoke of the body of a stranger that had been found near the gaming-houses frequented by those who visited Venice. Another recalled the fate of the young noble, who had fallen by the assassin's blow even on the Rialto, and another went into the details of a murder which had deprived a mother of her only son, and the daughter of a patrician of her lover. In this manner, as one after another contributed to the list, a little group, assembled on the quay, enumerated no less than five-and-twenty lives, which were believed to have been taken by the hand of Jacopo, without including the vindictive and useless assassination of him whose funeral rites had just been celebrated. Happily, perhaps, for his peace of mind, the subject of all these rumors, and of the maledictions which they drew upon his head, knew nothing of either. Before his judges he had made no defence whatever, firmly refusing to answer their interrogatories.

"Ye know what I have done, Messires," he said, haughtily. "And what I have not done, ye know. As for yourselves, look to your own interests."

When again in his cell, he demanded food, and ate tranquilly, though with moderation. Every instrument which could possibly be used against his life, was then removed, his irons were finally and carefully examined, and he was left to his thoughts. It was in this situation that the prisoner heard the approach of footsteps to his cell. The bolts turned, and the door opened. The form of a priest appeared between him and the day. The latter, however, held a lamp, which, as the cell was again shut and secured, he placed on the low shelf that held the jug and loaf of the prisoner.

Jacopo received his visitor calmly, but with the deep respect of one who reverenced his holy office. He arose, crossed himself, and advanced as far as the chains permitted, to do him honor.

"Thou art welcome, father," he said; "in cutting me off from earth, the Council, I see, does not wish to cut me off from God."

"That would exceed their power, son. He who died for them, shed His blood for thee, if thou wilt not reject His grace. But —Heaven knows I say it with reluctance! thou art not to think that one of thy sins, Jacopo, can have hope without deep and heartfelt repentance!"

"Father, have any?"

The Carmelite started, for the point of the question, and the tranquil tones of the

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speaker, had a strange effect in such an interview.

"Thou art not what I had supposed thee, Jacopo!" he answered. "Thy mind is not altogether obscured in darkness, and thy crimes have been committed against the consciousness of their enormity."

"I fear this is true, reverend monk."

"Thou must feel their weight in the poignancy of grief—in the——" Father Anselmo stopped, for a sob at that moment apprised them that they were not alone. Moving aside, in a little alarm, the action discovered the figure of the shrinking Gelsomina, who had entered the cell, favored by the keepers, and concealed by the robes of the Carmelite. Jacopo groaned, when he beheld her form, and turning away, he leaned against the wall.

"Daughter, why art thou here—and who art thou?" demanded the monk.

"'Tis the child of the principal keeper," said Jacopo, perceiving that she was unable to answer, "one known to me, in my frequent adventures in this prison."

The eye of Father Anselmo wandered from one to the other. At first its expression was severe, and then, as it saw each countenance in turn, it became less unkind, until it softened, at the exhibition of their mutual agony.

"This comes of human passions!" he said, in a tone between consolation and reproof. "Such are ever the fruits of crime."

"Father," said Jacopo, with earnestness, "I may deserve the word; but the angels in Heaven are scarce purer than this weeping girl!"

"I rejoice to hear it. I will believe thee, unfortunate man, and glad am I that thy soul is relieved from the sin of having corrupted one so youthful."

The bosom of the prisoner heaved, while Gelsomina shuddered.

"Why hast thou yielded to the weakness of nature, and entered the cell?" asked the good Carmelite, endeavoring to throw into his eye a reproof that the pathos and kindness of his tones contradicted. "Didst thou know the character of the man thou loved?"

"Immaculate Maria!" exclaimed the girl —"no—no—no!"

"And now that thou has learned the truth, surely thou art no longer the victim of wayward fancies!"

The gaze of Gelsomina was bewildered, but anguish prevailed over all other expression. She bowed her head, partly in shame, but more in sorrow, without answering.

"I know not, children, what end this interview can answer," continued the monk—"I am sent hither to receive the last confession of a bravo, and surely one who has so much cause to condemn the deception he has practised, would not wish to hear the details of such a life?"

"No—no—no—" murmured Gelsomina again, enforcing her words with a wild gesture of the hand.

"It is better, Father, that she should believe me all that her fancy can imagine as monstrous," said Jacopo, in a thick voice; "she will then learn to hate my memory."

Gelsomina did not speak, but the negative gesture was repeated frantically.

"The heart of the poor child hath been sorely touched," said the Carmelite, with concern. "We must not treat so tender a flower rudely. Hearken to me, daughter, and consult thy reason more than thy weakness."

"Question her not, Father—let her curse me and depart."

"Carlo!" shrieked Gelsomina.

A long pause succeeded. The monk perceived that human passion was superior to his art, and that the case must be left to time; while the prisoner maintained within himself a struggle more fierce than any which it had yet been his fate to endure. The lingering desires of the world conquered, and he broke silence.

"Father," he said, advancing to the length of his chain, and speaking both solemnly, and with dignity, "I had hoped—I had prayed that this unhappy but innocent creature might have turned from her own weakness with loathing, when she came to know that the man she loved was a bravo.—But I did injustice to the heart of woman!" Tell me, Gelsomina, and as thou valuest thy salvation, deceive me not—canst thou look at me without horror?"

Gelsomina trembled, but she raised her eyes, and smiled on him, as the weeping infant returns the earnest and tender regard of its mother. The effect of that glance on

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Jacopo was so powerful, that his sinewy frame shook, until the wondering Carmelite heard the clanking of his chains.

"'Tis enough," he said, struggling to command himself, "Gelsomina, thou shalt hear my confession. Thou hast long been mistress of one great secret, none other shall be hid from thee."

"Antonio?" gasped the girl,—"Carlo! Carlo! what had that aged fisherman done that thy hand should seek his life?"

"Antonio!" echoed the monk; dost thou stand charged with his death, my son?"

"It is the crime for which I am condemned to die."

The Carmelite sank upon the stool of the prisoner, and sat motionless, looking with an eye of horror from the countenance of the unmoved Jacopo to that of his trembling companion. The truth began to dawn upon him, though his mind was still enveloped in the web of Venetian mystery.

"Here is some horrible mistake!" he whispered, "I will hasten to thy judges and undeceive them."

"The prisoner smiled calmly, as he reached out a hand to arrest the zealous movement of the simple Carmelite.

"'Twill be useless," he said; "it is the pleasure of the Three that I should suffer for old Antonio's death."

"Then wilt thou die unjustly—I am a witness that he fell by other hands."

"Father!" shrieked Gelsomina, "oh! repeat the words—say that Carlo could not do the cruel deed!"

"Of that murder, at least, is he innocent."

"Gelsomina!" said Jacopo, struggling to stretch forth his arms toward her, and yielding to a full heart, "and of every other!"

A cry of wild delight burst from the lips of the girl, who in the next instant lay senseless on his bosom.

We draw the veil before the scene that followed. Near an hour must pass before we can again remove it. The cell then exhibited a group in its centre, over which the lamp shed its feeble light, marking the countenances of the different personages with strong tints and deep shadows, in a manner to bring forth all the force of Italian expression. The Carmelite was seated on the stool, while Jacopo and Gelsomina knelt beside him. The former of the two last was speaking earnestly, while his auditors caught each syllable that issued from his lips, as if interest in his innocence were still stronger than curiosity.

"I have told you, Father," he continued, "that a false accusation of having wronged the customs, brought my unhappy parent under the senate's displeasure, and that he was many years an innocent inhabitant of one of these accursed cells, while we believed him in exile among the islands. At length we succeeded in getting such proof before the council as ought to have satisfied the patricians of their own injustice. I am afraid that when men pretend that the chosen of the earth exercise authority, they are not ready to admit their errors, for it would be proof against the merit of their system. The council delayed a weary time to do us justice—so long, that my poor mother sank under her sufferings. My sister, a girl of Gelsomina's years, followed her soon—for the only reason given by the state, when pressed for proof, was the suspicion that one who sought her love was guilty of the crime for which my unhappy father perished."

"And did they refuse to repair their injustice?" exclaimed the Carmelite.

"They could not do it, Father, without publishing their fallibility. The credit of certain great patricians was concerned, and I fear there is a morality in these councils which separates the deed of the man from those of the senators, putting policy before justice."

"This may be true, son—for when a community is grounded on false principles, its interests must, of necessity, be maintained by sophisms. God will view this act with a different eye!"

"Else would the world be hopeless, Father! After years of prayers and interest, I was, under a solemn oath of secrecy, admitted to my father's cell. There was happiness in being able to administer to his wants—in hearing his voice—in kneeling for his blessing. Gelsomina was then a child approaching womanhood. I knew not their motive, though after-thoughts left it no secret, and I was permitted to see my father through her means. When they believed that I was sufficiently caught in their toils, I was led into that fatal error which has destroyed

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my hopes, and brought me to this condition."

"Thou hast affirmed thy innocence, my son!"

"Innocent of shedding blood, Father, but not of lending myself to their artifices. I will not weary you, holy monk, with the history of the means by which they worked upon my nature. I was sworn to serve the state, as its secret agent, for a certain time. The reward was to be my father's freedom. Had they taken me in the world, and in my senses, their arts would not have triumphed; but a daily witness of the sufferings of him who had given me life, and who was now all that was left to me in the world, they were too strong for my weakness. They whispered to me of racks and wheels, and I was shown paintings of dying martyrs, that I might understand the agony they could inflict. Assassinations were frequent, and called for the care of the police—in short, Father,"—Jacopo hid his face in the dress of Gelsomina, —"I consented to let them circulate such tales as might draw the eye of the public on me. I need not add, that he who lends himself to his own infamy will soon obtain his object."

"With what end was this miserable falsehood invented?"

"Father, I was applied to as a public bravo, and my reports, in more ways than one, answered their designs. That I saved some lives is at least a consolation for the error, or crime, into which I fell!"

"I understand thee, Jacopo. I have heard that Venice did not hesitate to use the ardent and brave in this manner. Holy St. Mark! can deceit like this be practised under the sanction of thy blessed name!"

"Father, it is, and more. I had other duties connected with the interests of the republic, and, of course, I was practised in their discharge. The citizens marvelled that one like me should go at large, while the vindictive and revengeful took the circumstance as a proof of address. When rumor got too strong for appearances, the Three took measures to direct it to other things; and when it grew too faint for their wishes, it was fanned. In short, for three long and bitter years did I pass the life of the damned—sustained only by the hope of liberating my father, and cheered by the love of this innocent!"

"Poor Jacopo, thou art to be pitied! I will remember thee in my prayers."

"And thou, Gelsomina?"

The keeper's daughter did not answer. Her ears had drunk in each syllable that fell from his lips, and now that the whole truth began to dawn on her mind, there was a bright radiance in her eye that appeared almost supernatural to those who witnessed it.

"If I have failed in convincing thee, Gelsomina," continued Jacopo, "that I am not the wretch I seemed, would that I had been dumb!"

She stretched a hand toward him, and, dropping her head on his bosom, wept.

"I see all thy temptations, poor Carlo," she said, softly; "I know how strong was thy love for thy father."

"Dost thou forgive me, dearest Gelsomina, for the deception on thy innocence?"

"There was no deception—I believe thee a son ready to die for his father, and I find thee what I thought thee."

The good Carmelite regarded this scene with eyes of interest and indulgence.—Tears wetted his cheeks.

"Thy affection for each other, children," he said, "is such as angels might indulge.—Has thy intercourse been of long date?"

"It has lasted years, Father."

"And thou, daughter, has been with Jacopo in the cell of his parent?"

"I was his constant guide on these holy errands, Father."

The monk mused deeply. After a silence of several minutes, he proceeded to the duties of his holy office. Receiving the spiritual confession of the prisoner, he gave the absolution with a fervor which proved how deeply his sympathies were enlisted in behalf of the youthful pair. This duty done, he gave Gelsomina his hand, and there was a mild confidence in his countenance, as he took leave of Jacopo.

"We quit thee," he said—"but be of heart, son. I cannot think that even Venice will be deaf to a tale like thine! Trust first to thy God—and, believe that neither this faithful girl nor I will abandon thee, without an effort."

Jacopo received this assurance like one ac-

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customed to exist in extreme jeopardy. The smile which accompanied his own adieus had in it as much of incredulity as of melancholy. It was, however, full of the joy of a lightened heart.

CHAPTER XXX.

Your heart
Is free, and quick with virtuous wrath to accuse
Appearances; and views a criminal
In innocence's shadow.—WERNER.

THE Carmelite and Gelsomina found the keepers in waiting, and when they quitted the cell its door was secured for the night. As they had no farther concerns with the jailers, they passed on unquestioned. But when the end of the corridor, which led towards the apartments of the keeper was reached, the monk stopped.

"Art thou equal to a great effort, in order that the innocent shall not die?" he suddenly asked, though with a solemnity that denoted the influence of a high and absorbing motive.

"Father!"

"I would know if thy love for the youth can sustain thee in a trying scene; for without this effort he will surely perish!"

"I would die to save Jacopo a pang!"

"Deceive not thyself, daughter!—Canst thou forget thy habits, overstep the diffidence of thy years and condition; stand and speak fearlessly in the presence of the great and dreaded?"

"Reverend Carmelite, I speak daily, without fear, though not without awe, to one more to be dreaded than any in Venice."

The monk looked in admiration at the gentle being whose countenance was glowing with the mild resolution of innocence and affection, and he motioned for her to follow. "We will go, then, before the proudest and the most fearful of earth, should there be occasion," he resumed. "We will do our duty to both parties; to the oppressor and the oppressed, that the sin of omission lie not on our souls."

Father Anselmo, without further explanation, led the obedient girl into that part of the palace, which was known to be appropriated to the private uses of the titular head of the republic.

The jealousy of the Venetian patricians on the subject of their Doge is a matter of history. He was, by situation, a puppet in the hands of the nobles, who only tolerated his existence, because the theory of their government required a seeming agent in the imposing ceremonies that formed part of their specious system, and in their intercourse with other states. He dwelt, in his palace, like the queen-bee in the hive, pampered and honored to the eye, but in truth devoted to the objects of those who alone possess the power to injure, and perhaps we might add, like the insect named, known for consuming more than a usual portion of the fruits of the common industry.

Father Anselmo was indebted to his own decision, and to the confidence of his manner, in reaching the private apartments of a prince, thus secluded and watched. He was permitted to pass by various sentinels, who imagined, from his holy calling and calm step, that he was some friar employed in his usual and privileged office. By this easy, quiet method did the Carmelite and his companion penetrate to the very antechamber of the sovereign, a spot that thousands had been defeated in attempting to reach by means more elaborate.

There were merely two or three drowsy inferior officers of the household in waiting. One arose, quickly, at the unexpected appearance of these unknown visitors, expressing, by the surprise and the confusion of his eye, the wonder into which he was thrown by so unlooked-for guests.

"His highness waits for us, I fear?" simply observed Father Anselmo, who had known how to quiet his concern in a look of passive courtesy.

"Santa Maria! holy Father, you should know best, but——"

"We will not lose more time in idle words, son, when there has already been this delay—show us to the closet of his highness."

"It is forbidden to usher any, unannounced, into the presence——"

"Thou seest this is not an ordinary visit. Go, inform the Doge that the Carmelite he expects, and the youthful maiden, in whom his princely bosom feels so parental an interest, await his pleasure."

"His highness has then commanded——"

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"Tell him, moreover, that time presses; for the hour is near when innocence is condemned to suffer."

The usher was deceived by the gravity and assurance of the monk. He hesitated, and then, throwing open a door, he showed the visitors into an inner room, where he requested them to await his return. After this, he went on the desired commission to the closet of his master.

It has already been shown that the reigning Doge, if such a title can be used of a prince who was merely a tool of the aristocracy, was a man advanced in years. He had thrown aside the cares of the day, and, in the retirement of his privacy, was endeavoring to indulge those human sympathies that had so little play in the ordinary duties of his factitious condition, by holding intercourse with the mind of one of the classics of his country. His state was laid aside for lighter ease and personal freedom. The monk could not have chosen a happier moment for his object, since the man was undefended by the usual appliances of his rank, and he was softened by communion with one who had known how to mould and temper the feelings of his readers at will. So entire was the abstraction of the Doge, at the moment, that the usher entered unheeded, and had stood in respectful attention to his sovereign's pleasure, near a minute before he was seen.

"What would'st thou, Marco?" demanded the prince, when his eye rose from the page.

"Signor," returned the officer, using the familiar manner in which those nearest to the persons of princes are permitted to indulge—"here are the reverend Carmelite, and the young girl, in waiting."

"How sayest thou?"—a Carmelite and a girl!"

"Signor, the same. Those whom your highness expects."

"What bold pretence is this!"

"Signor, I do but repeat the words of the monk. 'Tell his highness,' said the father, 'that the Carmelite he wishes to see, and the young girl in whose happiness his princely bosom feels so parental an interest, await his pleasure.'"

There passed a glow, in which indignation was brighter than shame over the wasted cheek of the old prince, and his eye kindled.

"And this to me—even in my palace!"

"Pardon, signor—This is no shameless priest, like so many that disgrace the tonsure. Both monk and girl have innocent and harmless looks, and I do suspect your highness may have forgotten."

The bright spots disappeared from the prince's cheeks, and his eye regained its paternal expression. But age and experience, in his delicate duties, had taught the Doge of Venice caution. He well knew that memory had not failed him, and he at once saw that a hidden meaning lay concealed beneath an application so unusual. There might be a device of his enemies, who were numerous and active, or, in truth, there might be some justifiable motive to warrant the applicant in resorting to a measure so hardy.

"Did the Carmelite say more, good Marco?" he asked, after deep reflection.

"Signor, he said there was great urgency, as the hour was near when the innocent might suffer. I doubt not that he comes with a petition in behalf of some young indiscreet, for there are said to be several young nobles arrested for their follies in the carnival. The female may be a sister disguised."

"Bid one of thy companions come hither; and, when I touch my bell, do thou usher these visitors to my presence."

The attendant withdrew, taking care to pass into the antechamber, by doors that rendered it unnecessary to show himself, too soon, to those who expected his return. The second usher quickly made his appearance, and was immediately dispatched in quest of one of the Three, who was occupied with important papers, in an adjoining closet. The senator was not slow to obey the summons, for he appeared there as a friend of the prince, having been admitted publicly and with the customary honors.

"Here are visitors of an unusual character, signor," and the Doge, rising to receive him whom he had summoned in precaution to himself, "and I would have a witness of their requests."

"Your highness does well to make us of the senate share your labors; though if any mistaken opinion of the necessity has led you

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to conceive it important to call a counsellor each time a guest enters the palace——"

"It is well, signor," mildly interrupted the prince, touching the bell. "I hope my importunity has not deranged you. But here come those I expect."

Father Anselmo and Gelsomina entered the closet together. The first glance convinced the Doge that he received strangers. He exchanged looks with the member of the secret council, and each saw in the other's eye that the surprise was mutual.

When fairly in the presence, the Carmelite threw back his cowl, entirely exposing the whole of his ascetic features, while Gelsomina, awed by the rank of him who received them, shrunk abashed, partly concealed by his robes.

"What means this visit?" demanded the prince, whose finger pointed to the shrinking form of the girl, while his eye rested steadily on that of the monk, "and that unusual companion? Neither the hour, nor the mode, is customary."

Father Anselmo stood before the Venetian sovereign for the first time. Accustomed, like all of that region, and more especially in that age, to calculate his chances of success warily, before venturing to disburden his mind, the monk fastened a penetrating look on his interrogator.

"Illustrious prince," he said "we come petitioners for justice. They who are thus commissioned had need be bold, lest they do their own character, and their righteous office, discredit."

"Justice is the glory of St. Mark, and the happiness of his subjects. Thy course, Father, is not according to established rules, and wholesome restraints, but it may have its apology—name thy errand."

"There is one in the cells, condemned of the public tribunals, and he must die with the return of day, unless your princely authority interfere to save him."

"One condemned of the tribunals may merit his fate."

"I am the ghostly adviser of the unhappy youth, and in the execution of my sacred office I have learned that he is innocent."

"Didst thou say, condemned of the common judges, father?"

"Sentenced to die, highness, by a decree of the criminal tribunals."

The prince appeared relieved. So long as the affair had been public, there was at least reason to believe he might indulge his love of the species, by listening farther, without offence to the tortuous policy of the state. Glancing his eye at the motionless inquisitor, as if to seek approbation, he advanced a step nearer to the Carmelite, with increasing interest in the application.

"By what authority, reverend priest, dost thou impeach the decision of the judges?" he demanded.

"Signor, as I have just said, in virtue of knowledge gained in the exercise of my holy office. He has laid bare his soul to me, as one whose feet were in the grave; and, though offending, like all born of woman, towards his God, he is guiltless as respects the state."

"Thinkest thou, father, that the law would ever reach its victim, were we to listen only to self-accusations? I am old, monk, and have long worn that troublesome cap," pointing to the horned bonnet, which lay near his hand, the symbol of his state, "and in my day, I do not recall the criminal that has not fancied himself the victim of untoward circumstances."

"That men apply this treacherous solace to their consciences, one of my vocation has not to learn. Our chief task is to show the delusion of those, who, while condemning their own sins, by words of confession and self-abasement, make a merit of humility; but, Doge of Venice, there is still a virtue in the sacred rite I have this evening been required to perform, which can overcome the mounting of the most exalted spirit. Many attempt to deceive themselves, at the confessional, while, by the power of God, few succeed."

"Praised be the blessed mother and the incarnate son, that it is so!" returned the prince, struck by the mild faith of the monk, and crossing himself, reverently. "Father, thou hast forgotten to name the condemned?"

"It is a certain Jacopo Frontoni;—a reputed bravo."

The start, the changing color, and the glance of the prince of Venice, were full of natural surprise.

"Callest thou the bloodiest stiletto that ever disgraced the city, the weapon of a re-

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puted bravo! The arts of the monster have prevailed over thy experience, monk!—the true confession of such a wretch, would be but a history of bloody and revolting crimes."

"I entered his cell with this opinion,-but I left it convinced that the public sentiment has done him wrong. If your highness will deign hear his tale, you will think him a fit subject for your pity, rather than for punishment."

"Of all the criminals of my reign, this is the last in whose favor I could have imagined there was aught to be said!—Speak, freely, Carmelite; for curiosity is as strong as wonder."

So truly did the Doge give utterance to his feelings, that he momentarily forgot the presence of the inquisitor, whose countenance might have shown him that the subject was getting to be grave.

The monk ejaculated a thanksgiving, for it was not always easy, in that city of mystery, to bring truth to the ears of the great. When men live under a system of duplicity, more or less of the quality gets interwoven with the habits of the most ingenuous, although they may remain, themselves, unconscious of the taint. Thus Father Anselmo, as he proceeded with the desired explanation, touched more tenderly on the practices of the state, and used more of reserve in alluding to those usages and opinions, which one of his holy calling and honest nature, under other circumstances, would have fearlessly condemned.

"It may not be known to one of your high condition, sovereign prince," resumed the Carmelite, "that an humble, but laborious mechanic of this city, a certain Francesco Frontoni, was long since condemned for frauds against the republic's revenue. This is a crime St. Mark never fails to visit with his heavy displeasure; for when men place the goods of the world before all other considerations, they mistake the objects which have brought them together in social union."

"Father, thou wert speaking of a certain Francesco Frontoni?"

"Highness, such was his name. The unhappy man had taken into his confidence and friendship one, who, pretending to his daughter's love, might appear to be the master of his secrets. When this false suitor stood on the verge of detection, for offences against the customs, he laid a snare of deception which, while he was permitted to escape, drew the anger of the state on his too confiding friend. Francesco was condemned to the cells, until he might reveal facts which never had an existence."

"This is a hard fate, reverend friar, could it be but proved!"

"'Tis the evil of secrecy and intrigue, great Doge, in managing the common interests—"

"Hast thou more of this Francesco, monk!"

"His history is short, signor; for at the age when most men are active in looking to their welfare, he was pining in a prison."

"I remember to have heard of some such accusation—but it occurred in the reign of the last Doge--did it not, father?"

"And he has endured to near the close of the reign of this, highness!"

"How! The senate, when apprised of the error of its judgment, was not slow to repair the wrong!"

The monk regarded the prince earnestly, as if he would make certain whether the surprise he witnessed was not a piece of consummate acting. He felt convinced that the affair was one of that class of acts, which, however oppressive, unjust, and destructive of personal happiness, had not sufficient importance to come before them who govern under systems which care more for their own preservation, than for the good of the ruled. "Signor Doge," he said, "the state is discreet in matters that touch its own reputation. There are reasons that I shall not presume to examine, why the cell of poor Francesco was kept closed long after the death and confession of his accuser left his innocence beyond dispute."

The prince mused, and then be bethought him to consult the countenance of his companion. The marble of the pilaster, against which he leaned, was not more cold and unmoved than the face of the inquisitor. The man had learned to smother every natural impulse in the assumed and factitious duties of his office.

"And what has this case of Francesco to do with the execution of the Bravo?" demanded the Doge, after a pause, in which he

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had in vain struggled to assume the indifference of his counsellor.

"That I shall leave this prison-keeper's daughter to explain—stand forth, child, and relate what you know, remembering, if you speak before the prince of Venice, that you also speak before the King of Heaven!"

Gelsomina trembled, for one of her habits, however supported by her motives, could not overcome a nature so retiring without a struggle. But faithful to her promise, and sustained by her affection for the condemned, she advanced a step, and stood no longer concealed by the robes of the Carmelite.

"Thou art the daughter of the prison-keeper?" asked the prince mildly, though surprise was strongly painted in his eye.

"Highness, we are poor, and we are unfortunate; we serve the state for bread."

"Ye serve a noble master, child. Dost thou know aught of this Bravo?"

"Dread sovereign, they that call him thus, know not his heart. One more true to his friends, more faithful to his word, or more suppliant with the saints, than Jacopo Frontoni, is not in Venice!"

"This is a character which art might appropriate, even to a bravo. But we waste the moments.—What have these Frontoni in common?"

"Highness, they are father and son, When Jacopo came to be of an age to understand the misfortunes of his family, he wearied the senators with applications in his father's behalf until they commanded the door of the cell to be secretly opened to a child so pious. I well know, great prince, that they who rule cannot have all-seeing eyes, else could this wrong never have happened. But Francesco wasted years in cells, chill and damp in winter, and scorching in summer, before the falsehood of the accusation was known. Then, as some relief to the sufferings so little merited, Jacopo was admitted."

"With what object, girl?"

"Highness, was it not in pity? They promised too, that in good time, the service of the son should buy the father's liberty. The patricians were slow to be convinced, and they made terms with poor Jacopo, who agreed to undergo a hard service, that his father might breathe free air before he died."

"Thou dealest in enigmas."

"I am little used, great Doge, to speak in such a presence, or on such subjects. But this I know, that for three weary years hath Jacopo been admitted to his father's cell, and that those up above consented to the visits; else would my father have denied them. I was his companion in the holy act, and will call the blessed Maria and the saints—"

"Girl, didst thou know him for a bravo?"

"Oh! Highness, no. To me he seemed a dutiful child, fearing God and honoring his parent. I hope never to feel another pang, like that which chilled my heart, when they said he I had known as the kind Carlo, was hunted in Venice as the abhorred Jacopo! But it is passed, the Mother of God be praised!"

"Thou art betrothed to this condemned man?"

The color did not deepen on the cheek of Gelsomina at this abrupt question, for the tie between her and Jacopo had become too sacred, for the ordinary weaknesses of her sex.

"Highness, yes; we were to be married, should it have pleased God, and those great senators who have so much influence over the happiness of the poor, to permit it."

"And thou art still willing, knowing the man, to pledge thy vows to one like Jacopo!"

"It is because I do know him to be as he is, that I most reverence him, great Doge. He has sold his time and his good name to the state, in order to save his imprisoned father, and in that I see nothing to frighten one he loves."

"This affair needs explanation, Carmelite. The girl has a heated fancy, and she renders that obscure she should explain."

"Illustrious prince, she would say that the republic was content to grant the son the indulgence of visiting the captive, with some encouragement of his release, on condition that the youth might serve the police by bearing a bravo's reputation."

"And for this incredible tale, father, you have the word of a condemned criminal!"

"With the near view of death before his eyes. There are means of rendering truth evident, familiar to those who are often near the dying penitents, that are unknown to those of the world. In any case, signor, the matter is worthy of investigation."

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"In that thou are right. Is the hour named for the execution?"

"With the morning light, prince."

"And the father?"

"Is dead."

"A prisoner, Carmelite?"

"A prisoner, Prince of Venice."

There was a pause.

"Hast thou heard of the death of one named Antonio?"

"Signor, yes. By the sacred nature of my holy office, do I affirm that of this crime is Jacopo innocent! I shrived the fisherman."

The Doge turned away, for the truth began to dawn upon him, and the flush which glowed on his aged cheek contained a confession that might not be observed by every eye. He sought the glance of his companion, but his own expression of human feeling was met by the disciplined features of the other, as light is coldly repelled from polished stone.

"Highness!" added a tremulous voice.

"What would'st thou, child?"

"There is a God for the republic, as well as for the gondolier! Your highness will turn this great crime from Venice?"

"Thou art of plain speech, girl!"

"The danger of Carlo has made me bold. You are much beloved by the people, and none speak of you that they do not speak of your goodness, and of your desire to serve the poor. You are the root of a rich and happy family, and you will not—nay, you cannot if you would, think it a crime for a son to devote all to a father. You are our father, and we have a right to come to you, even for mercy—but, highness, I ask only for justice."

"Justice is the motto of Venice."

"They who live in the high favor of Providence do not always know what the unhappy undergo. It has pleased God to afflict my own poor mother, who has griefs that, but for her patience and Christian faith, would have been hard to bear. The little care I had it in my power to show, first caught Jacopo's eye, for his heart was then full of the duty of the child. Would your highness consent to see poor Carlo, or to command him to be brought hither, his simple tale would give the lie to every foul slander they have dared to say against him."

"It is unnecessary—it is unnecessary. Thy faith in his innocence, girl, is more eloquent than any words of his can prove."

A gleam of joy irradiated the face of Gelsomina, who turned eagerly to the listening monk, as she continued—

"His highness listens," she said, "and we shall prevail! Father, they menace in Venice, and alarm the timid, but they will never do the deed we feared. Is not the God of Jacopo my God, and your God?—the God of the senate, and of the Doge?—of the Council, and of the republic? I would the secret members of the Three could have seen poor Jacopo, as I have seen him, coming from his toil, weary with labor, and heart-broken with delay, enter the winter or the summer cell—chilling or scorching, as the season might be—and struggling to be cheerful, that the falsely accused might not feel a greater weight of misery.—Oh! venerable and kind prince, you little know the burden that the feeble are often made to carry, for to you life has been sunshine; but there are millions who are condemned to do that they loathe, that they may not do that they dread."

"Child, thou tell'st me nothing new."

"Except in convincing you, highness, that Jacopo is not the monster they would have him. I do not know the secret reasons of the councils for wishing the youth to lend himself to a deception that had nigh proved so fatal; but all is explained, we have naught now to fear. Come, father; we will leave the good and just Doge to go to rest, as suits his years, and we will return to gladden the heart of Jacopo with our success, and thank the blessed Maria for her favor."

"Stay!" exclaimed the half-stifled old man. "Is this true that thou tellest me, girl:—Father, can it be so!"

"Signor, I have said all that truth and my conscience have prompted."

The prince seemed bewildered, turning his look from the motionless girl to the equally immovable member of the Three.

"Come hither, child," he said, his voice trembling as he spoke. "Come hither, that I may bless thee." Gelsomina sprang forward, and knelt at the feet of her sovereign. Father Anselmo never uttered a clearer or more fervent benediction than that which fell from the lips of the Prince of Venice. He raised the daughter of the prison-keeper, and

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motioned for both his visitors to withdraw. Gelsomina willingly complied, for her heart was already in the cell of Jacopo, in the eagerness to communicate her success; but the Carmelite lingered to cast a look behind, like one better acquainted with the effects of worldly policy, when connected with the interests of those who pervert governments to the advantage of the privileged. As he passed through the door, however, he felt his hopes revive, for he saw the aged prince, unable any longer to suppress his feelings, hastening towards his still silent companion, with both hands extended, eyes moistening with tears, and a look that betrayed the emotions of one anxious to find relief in human sympathies.

CHAPTER XXXI.

On—on—
It is our knell, or that of Venice.—On.
—*Marina Faliero.*

ANOTHER morning called the Venetians to their affairs. Agents of the police had been active in preparing the public mind, and as the sun rose above the narrow sea, the squares began to fill. There were present the curious citizen in his cloak and cap, bare-legged laborers in wondering awe, the circumspect Hebrew in his gaberdine and beard, masked gentlemen, and many an attentive stranger from among the thousands who still frequented that declining mart. It was rumored that an act of retributive justice was about to take place, for the peace of the town and and the protection of the citizen. In short, curiosity, idleness, and revenge, with all the usual train of human feelings, had drawn together a multitude eager to witness the agonies of a fellow creature.

The Dalmatians were drawn up near the sea, in a manner to enclose the two granite columns of the Piazetta. Their grave and disciplined faces fronted inwards, towards the African pillars, those well-known landmarks of death. A few grim warriors, of higher rank, paced the flags before the troops, while a dense crowd filled the exterior space. By special favor more than a hundred fishermen were grouped within the armed men, witnesses that their class had revenge. Between the lofty pedestals of St. Theodore and the winged lion lay the block and axe, the basket and the saw-dust; the usual accompaniments of justice in that day. By their side, stood the executioner.

At length a movement in the living mass drew every eye towards the gate of the palace. A murmur arose, the multitude waved, and a small body of the Sbirri came into view. Their steps were swift, like the march of destiny. The Dalmatians opened to receive these ministers of fate into their bosom, and closing their ranks again appeared to preclude the world, with its hopes, from the condemned. On reaching the block between the columns, the Sbirri fell off in files, waiting at a little distance, while Jacopo was left before the engines of death, attended by his ghostly counsellor, the Carmelite. The action left them open to the gaze of the throng.

Father Anselmo was in the usual attire of a bare-footed friar of his order. The cowl of the holy man was thrown back, exposing his mortified lineaments, and self-examining eye, to those around. The expression of his countenance was that of bewildered uncertainty, relieved by frequent, but fitful, glimmerings of hope. Though his lips moved constantly in prayer, his looks wandered, by an irrepressible impulse, from one window of the Doge's palace to another. He took his station near the condemned, however, and thrice crossed himself, fervently.

Jacopo had tranquilly placed his person before the block. His head was bare, his cheek colorless, his throat and neck uncovered to the shoulders, his body, in its linen, and the rest of his form, was clad in the ordinary dress of a gondolier. He kneeled, with his face bowed to the block, repeated a prayer, and rising he faced the multitude, with dignity and composure. As his eye moved slowly over the array of human countenances by which he was environed, a hectic glowed on his features, for not one of them all betrayed sympathy in his sufferings. His breast heaved, and those nearest to his person thought the self-command of the miserable man was about to fail him. The result disappointed expectation. There was a shudder, and the limbs settled into repose.

"Thou hast looked in vain, among the multitude, for a friendly eye?" said the Car-

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melite, whose attention had been drawn to the convulsive moment.

"None here have pity for an assassin."

"Remember thy Redeemer, son. He suffered ignominy and death, for a race that denied his Godhead, and derided his sorrows."

Jacopo crossed himself, and bowed his head, in reverence.

"Hast thou more prayers to repeat, Father?" demanded the chief of the Sbirri; he who was particularly charged with the duty of the hour. "Though the illustrious councils are so sure in justice, they are merciful to the souls of sinners."

"Are thy orders peremptory?" asked the monk, unconsciously fixing his eye, again, on the windows of the palace. "Is it certain that the prisoner is to die?"

The officer smiled at the simplicity of the question, but with the apathy of one too much familiarized with human suffering, to admit of compassion.

"Do any doubt it?" he rejoined. "It is the lot of man, reverend monk; and more especially is it the lot of those on whom the judgment of St. Mark has alighted. It were better that your penitent looked to his soul."

"Surely thou hast thy private and express commands! They have named a minute, when this bloody work is to be performed?"

"Holy Carmelite, I have. The time will not be weary, and you will do well to make the most of it, unless you have faith, already, in the prisoner's condition."

As he spoke, the officer threw a glance at the dial of the square, and walked coolly away. The action left the priest and the prisoner again alone, between the columns. It was evident that the former could not yet believe in the reality of the execution.

"Hast thou no hope, Jacopo?" he asked.

"Carmelite, in my God."

"They cannot commit this wrong! I shrived Antonio—I witnessed his fate, and the prince knows it!"

"What is a prince and his justice, where the selfishness of a few rules! Father, thou art new in the senate's service."

"I shall not presume to say that God will blast those who do this deed, for we cannot trace the mysteries of His wisdom. This life, and all this world can offer, are but specks in His omniscient eye, and what to us seems evil, may be pregnant with good.—Hast thou faith in thy Redeemer, Jacopo?"

The prisoner laid his hand upon his heart, and smiled, with the calm assurance that none but those who are thus sustained can feel.

"We will again pray, my son."

The Carmelite and Jacopo kneeled, side by side, the latter bowing his head to the block, while the monk uttered a final appeal to the mercy of the Diety. The former arose, but the latter continued in the suppliant attitude. The monk was so full of holy thoughts, that, forgetting his former wishes, he was nearly content the prisoner should pass into the fruition of that hope which elevated his own mind. The officer and executioner drew near, the former touching the arm of Father Anselmo, and pointing toward the distant dial.

"The moment is near;" he whispered, more from habit, than in any tenderness to the prisoner.

The Carmelite turned instinctively toward the palace, forgetting, in the sudden impulse, all but his sense of earthly justice. There were forms at the windows, and he fancied a signal, to stay the impending blow, was about to be given.

"Hold!" he exclaimed. "For the love of Maria of most pure memory, be not too hasty!"

The exclamation was repeated by a shrill female voice, and then Gelsomina, eluding every effort to arrest her, rushed through the Dalmatians, and reached the group between the granite columns. Wonder and curiosity agitated the multitude, and a deep murmur ran through the square.

"'Tis a maniac!" cried one.

"'Tis a victim of his arts!" said another, for when men have a reputation for any particular vice, the world seldom fails to attribute all the rest.

Gelsomina seized the bonds of Jacopo, and endeavored, frantically, to release his arms.

"I had hoped thou would'st have been spared this sight, poor Gessina!" said the condemned.

"Be not alarmed!" she answered, gasping

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for breath. "They do it in mockery—'tis one of their wiles to mislead—but they cannot—no, they dare not harm a hair of thy head, Carlo!"

"Dearest Gelsomina!"

"Nay, do not hold me.—I will speak to the citizens, and tell them all. They are angry now, but when they know the truth they will love thee, Carlo, as I do."

"Bless thee—bless thee!—I would thou hadst not come!"

"Fear not for me! I am little used to such a crowd, but thou wilt see that I shall dare to speak them fair, and to make known the truth boldly. I want but breath."

"Dearest! Thou hast a mother—a father to share thy tenderness. Duty to them will make thee happy."

"Now, I can speak, and thou shalt see how I will vindicate thy name."

She arose from the arms of her lover, who, notwithstanding his bonds, released his hold of her slight form with a reluctance greater than that with which he parted with life. The struggle in the mind of Jacopo seemed over. He bowed his head, passively, to the block, before which he was kneeling, and it is probable, by the manner in which his hands were clasped, that he prayed for her who left him. Not so Gelsomina. Parting her hair over her spotless forehead with both hands, she advanced toward the fishermen, who were familiar to her eye by their red caps and bare limbs. Her smile was like that which the imagination would bestow on the blessed, in their intercourse of love.

"Venetians!" she said, "I cannot blame you; ye are here to witness the death of one whom ye believe unfit to live——"

"The murderer of old Antonio!" muttered several of the group.

"Ay, even the murderer of that aged and excellent man. But, when your hear the truth, when you come to know that he, whom you have believed an assassin, was a pious child, a faithful servant of the republic, a gentle gondolier, and a true heart, you will change your bloody purpose, for a wish for justice."

A common murmur drowned her voice, which was so trembling and low, as to need deep stillness to render the words audible. The Carmelite had advanced to her side, and he motioned earnestly for silence.

"Hear her, men of the Lagunes!" he said; "she utters holy truth."

"This reverend and pious monk, with Heaven, is my witness. When you shall know Carlo better, and have heard his tale, ye will be the first to cry out for his release. I tell you this, that when the Doge shall appear at yon window and make the signal of mercy, you need not be angry, and believe that your class has been wronged. Poor Carlo——"

"The girl raves!" interrupted the moody fishermen. "Here is no Carlo, but Jacopo Frontoni, a common bravo."

Gelsomina smiled, in the security of the innocent, and, regaining her breath, which nervous agitation still disturbed, she resumed.

"Carlo, or Jacopo—Jacopo, or Carlo—it matters little."

"Ha! There is a sign from the palace!" shouted the Carmelite, stretching both his arms in that direction, as if to grasp a boon. The clarions sounded, and another wave stirred the multitude. Gelsomina uttered a cry of delight, and turned to throw herself upon the bosom of the reprieved. The axe glittered before her eyes, and the head of Jacopo rolled upon the stones, as if to meet her. A general movement in the living mass denoted the end.

The Dalmatians wheeled into column, the Sbirri pushed aside the throng, on their way to their haunts, the water of the bay was dashed upon the flags, the clotted saw-dust was gathered, the head and trunk, block, basket, axe, and executioner disappeared, and the crowd circulated around the fatal spot.

During this horrible and brief moment, neither Father Anselmo nor Gelsomina moved. All was over, and still the entire scene appeared to be delusion.

"Take away this maniac!" said an officer of the police, pointing to Gelsomina as he spoke.

He was obeyed with Venetian readiness, but his words proved prophetic, before his servitors had quitted the square. The Carmelite scarce breathed. He gazed at the moving multitude, at the windows of the palace, and at the sun which shone so gloriously in the heavens.

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"Thou art lost in this crowd!" whispered one at his elbow. "Reverend Carmelite, you will do well to follow me."

The monk was too much subdued to hesitate. His conductor led him, by many secret ways, to a quay, where he instantly embarked, in a gondola, for the main. Before the sun reached the meridian, the thoughtful and trembling monk was on his journey toward the States of the Church; and ere long he became established in the castle of Sant' Agata.

At the usual hour the sun fell behind the mountains of the Tyrol, and the moon reappeared above the Lido. The narrow streets of Venice, again, poured out their thousands upon the squares. The mild light fell athwart the quaint architecture, and the giddy tower, throwing a deceptive glory on the city of islands.

The porticos became brilliant with lamps, the gay laughed, the reckless trifled, the masker pursued his hidden purpose, the cantatrice and the grotesque acted their parts, and the million existed in that vacant enjoyment which distinguishes the pleasures of the thoughtless and the idle. Each lived for himself, while the State of Venice held its vicious sway, corrupting alike the ruler and the ruled, by its mockery of those sacred principles which are alone founded in truth and natural justice.

END OF "THE BRAVO."

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THE HEIDENMAUER.

INTRODUCTION.

"I shall crave your forbearance a little; may be, I will call upon you anon, for some advantage to yourself."—*Measure for Measure.*

CONTRARY to a long-established usage, a summer had been passed within the walls of a large town; but, the moment of liberation arrived, the bird does not quit its cage with greater pleasure than that with which post-horses were commanded. We were four in a light travelling caleçhe, which strong Norman cattle transported merrily toward their native province. For a time we quitted Paris, the queen of modern cities, with its tumults and its order; its palaces and its lanes; its elegance and its filth; its restless inhabitants and its stationary politicians; its theories and its practices; its riches and its poverty; its gay and its sorrowful; its rentiers and its patriots; its young liberals and its old illiberals; its three estates and its equality; its delicacy of speech and its strength of conduct: its government of the people and its people of no government; its bayonets and its moral force; its science and its ignorance; its amusements and its revolutions; its resistance that goes backward, and its movement that stands still; its milliners, its philosophers, its opera-dancers, its poets, its fiddlers, its bankers, and its cooks. Although so long enthralled within the barriers, it was not easy to quit Paris entirely without regret—Paris, which every stranger censures, and every stranger seeks; which moralists abhor and imitate; which causes the heads of the old to shake, and the hearts of the young to beat;—Paris, the centre of so much that is excellent, and of so much that cannot be named!

That night we laid our heads on rustic pillows, far from the French capital. The succeeding day we snuffed the air of the sea. Passing through Artois and French Flanders, on the fifth morning we entered the new kingdom of Belgium, by the historical and respectable towns of Doua, and Tournai, and Ath. At every step we met the flag which flutters over the pavilion of the Tuileries, and recognized the confident air and swinging gait of French soldiers. They had just been employed in propping the crumbling throne of the house of Saxe. To us they seemed as much at home as when they lounged on the Quai d'Orsay.

There was still abundant evidence visible at Brussels, of the fierce nature of the struggle that had expelled the Dutch. Forty-six shells were sticking in the side of a single building of no great size, while ninety-three grape-shot were buried in one of its pilasters! In our own rooms, too, there were fearful signs of war. The mirrors were in fragments, the walls broken by langrage, the wood-work of the beds was pierced by shot, and the furniture was marked by rude encounters. The trees of the park were mutilated in a thousand places, and one of the little Cupids, that we had left laughing above the principal gate three years before, was now maimed and melancholy, whilst its companion had altogether taken flight on the wings of a cannon-ball. Though dwelling in the very centre of so many hostile vestiges, we happily escaped the sight of human blood; for we understood from the obliging Swiss who presides over the hotel that his cellars, at all times in repute, were in more than usual request during the siege. From so much proof we were left to infer, that the Belgians had made stout battle for their emancipation, one sign at least that they merited to be free.

Our road lay by Louvain, Thirlemont, Liège, Aix-la-Chapelle, and Juliers, to the Rhine. The former of these towns had been

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the scene of a contest between the hostile armies, the preceding week. As the Dutch had been accused of unusual excesses in their advance, we looked out for the signs. How many of these marks had been already obliterated, we could not well ascertain; but those which were still visible gave us reason to think that the invaders did not merit all the opprobrium they had received. Each hour, as life advances, am I made to see how capricious and vulgar is the immortality conferred by a newspaper!

It would be injustice to the ancient Bishopric of Liège to pass its beautiful scenery without a comment. The country possesses nearly every requisite for the milder and more rural sort of landscape;—isolated and innumerable farm-houses, herds in the fields, living hedges, a waving surface, and a verdure to rival the emerald. By a happy accident, the road runs for miles on an elevated ridge, enabling the traveller to enjoy these beauties at his ease.

At Aix-la-Chapelle we bathed, visited the relics, saw the scene of so many coronations of emperors of more or less renown, sat in the chair of Charlemagne, and went our way.

The Rhine was an old acquaintance. A few years earlier, I had stood upon the sands, at Katwyck, and watched its periodical flow into the North Sea, by means of sluices made in the short reign of the good King Louis, and, the same summer, I had bestrode it, a brawling brook, on the icy side of St. Gothard. We had come now to look at its beauties, in its most beautiful part, and to compare them, so far as native partiality might permit, with the well-established claims of our own Hudson.

Quitting Cologne, its exquisite but incomplete cathedral, with the crane that has been poised on its unfinished towers five hundred years, its recollections of Rubens and his royal patroness, we travelled up the stream so leisurely as to examine all that offered, and yet so fast as to avoid the hazard of satiety. Here we met Prussian soldiers, preparing, by mimic service, for the more serious duties of their calling. Lancers were galloping, in bodies, across the open fields; videttes were posted, the cocked pistol in hand, at every hay-stack; while couriers rode, under the spur, from point to point, as if the great strife, which is so menacingly preparing, and which sooner or later must come, had actually commenced. As Europe is now a camp, these hackneyed sights scarce drew a look aside. We were in quest of the interest which Nature, in her happier humors, bestows.

There were ruined castles, by scores; gray fortresses, abbeys, some deserted and others yet tenanted; villages and towns; the seven mountains; cliffs and vineyards. At every step we felt how intimate is the association between the poetry of Nature and that of art; between the hill-side with its falling torrent, and the moral feeling that lends them interest. Here was an island, of no particular excellence, but the walls of a convent of the middle ages crumbled on its surface. There was a naked rock, destitute of grandeur, and wanting in those tints which milder climates bestow, but a baronial hold tottered on its apex. Here Cæsar led his legions to the stream, and there Napoleon threw his corps-d'armée on the hostile bank; this monument was to Hoche, and from that terrace the great Adolphus directed his battalions. Time is wanting to mellow the view of our own historical sites; for the sympathy that can be accumulated only by the general consent of mankind has not yet clothed them with the indefinable colors of distance and convention.

In the mood likely to be created by a flood of such recollections, we pursued our way along the southern margin of this great artery of central Europe. We wondered at the vastness of the Rheinfels, admired the rare jewel of the ruined church at Bacharach, and marvelled at the giddy precipice on which a prince of Prussia even now dwells, in the eagle-like grandeur and security of the olden time. On reaching Mayence, the evening of the second day, we deliberately and, as we hoped, impartially compared what had just been seen with that which is so well and so affectionately remembered.

I had been familiar with the Hudson from childhood. The great thoroughfare of all who journey from the interior of the state toward the sea, necessity had early made me acquainted with its windings, its promontories, its islands, its cities, and its villages. Even its hidden channels had been professionally examined, and time was when there

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did not stand an unknown seat on its banks, or a hamlet that had not been visited. Here then was the force of deep impressions to oppose the influence of objects still visible.

To me it is quite apparent that the Rhine, while it frequently possesses more of any particular species of scenery, within a given number of miles, than the Hudson, has none of so great excellence. It wants the variety, the noble beauty, and the broad grandeur of the American stream. The latter, within the distance universally admitted to contain the finest parts of the Rhine, is both a large and a small river; it has its bays, its narrow passages among the meadows, its frowning gorges, and its reaches resembling Italian lakes; whereas the most that can be said of its European competitor, is that all these wonderful peculiarities are feebly imitated. Ten degrees of a lower latitude supply richer tints, brighter transitions of light and shadow, and more glorious changes of the atmosphere, to embellish the beauties of our western clime. In islands, too, the advantage is with the Hudson, for, while those of the Rhine are the most numerous, those of the former stream are bolder, better placed, and, in every natural feature, of more account.

When the comparison between these celebrated rivers is extended to their artificial accessories, the result becomes more doubtful. The buildings of the older towns and villages of Europe seemed grouped especially for effect, as seen in the distant view, though security was in truth the cause, while the spacious, cleanly, and cheerful villages of America must commonly be entered to be appreciated. In the other hemisphere, the maze of roofs, the church-towers, the irregular faces of wall, and frequently the castle rising to a pinnacle in the rear, give a town the appearance of some vast and antiquated pile devoted to a single object. Perhaps the boroughs of the Rhine have less of this picturesque or landscape effect, than the villages of France and Italy, for the Germans regard space more than their neighbors, but still, are they less commonplace than the smiling and thriving little marts that crowd the borders of the Hudson. To this advantage must be added that which is derived from the countless ruins and a crowd of recollections. Here, the superiority of the artificial auxiliaries of the Rhine ceases, and those of her rival come into the ascendant. In modern abodes, in villas, and even in seats, those of princes alone excepted, the banks of the Hudson have scarcely an equal in any region. There are finer and nobler edifices on the Brenta, and in other favored spots, certainly, but I know no stream that has so many that please and attract the eye. As applied to moving objects, an important feature in this comparison, the Hudson has perhaps no rival in any river that can pretend to a picturesque character. In numbers, in variety of rig, in beauty of form, in swiftness and dexterity of handling, and in general grace of movement, this extraordinary passage ranks amongst the first of the world. The yards of tall ships swing among the rocks and forests of the highlands, while sloop, schooner, and bright-canopied steam-boat, yacht, periagua, and canoe are seen in countless numbers, decking its waters. There is one more eloquent point of difference that should not be neglected. Drawings and engravings of the Rhine lend their usual advantages, softening and frequently rendering beautiful objects of no striking attractions when seen as they exist; while every similar attempt to represent the Hudson at once strikes the eye as unworthy of its original.

Nature is fruitful of fine effects in every region, and it is a mistake not to enjoy her gifts, as we move through life, on account of some fancied superiority in this, or that, quarter of the world. We left the Rhine, therefore, with regret, for, in its way, a lovelier stream can scarce be found.

At Mayence we crossed to the right bank of the river, and passing by the duchies of Nassau and Darmstadt, entered that of Baden, at Heidelberg. Here we sat upon the Tun, examined the castle, and strolled in the alleys of the remarkable garden. Thence we proceeded to Manheim, turning our faces, once more, toward the French capital. The illness of one of the party compelled us to remain a few hours in the latter city, which presented little for reflection, unless it were that this, like one or two other towns we had lately seen, served to convince us, that the symmetry and regularity which render large cities magnificent, cause those that are small to appear mean.

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It was a bright autumnal day when we returned to the left bank of the Rhine, on the way to Paris. The wishes of the invalid had taken the appearance of strength, and we hoped to penetrate the mountains which bound the Palatinate on its southwestern side, and to reach Kaiserslautern, on the great Napoleon road, before the hour of rest. The main object had been accomplished, and as with all who have effected their purpose, the principal desire was to be at home. A few posts convinced us that repose was still necessary to the invalid. This conviction, unhappily as I then believed, came too late, for we had already crossed the plain of the Palatinate, and we were drawing near to the chain of mountains just mentioned, which are a branch of the Vosges, and are known in the country as the Haart. We had made no calculations for such an event, and former experience had caused us to distrust the inns of this isolated portion of the kingdom of Bavaria. I was just bitterly regretting our precipitation, when the church-tower of Duerckheim peered above the vineyards ; for, on getting nearer to the base of the hills, the land became slightly undulating, and the vine abundant. As we approached, the village or borough promised little, but we had the word of the postilion that the post-house was an inn fit for a king; and as to the wine, he could give no higher eulogium than a flourish of the whip, an eloquent expression of pleasure for a German of his class. We debated the question of proceeding, or of stopping, in a good deal of doubt, to the moment when the carriage drew up before the sign of the Ox. A substantial-looking burgher came forth to receive us. There was the pledge of good cheer in the ample development of his person, which was not badly typified by the sign, and the hale, hearty character of his hospitality removed all suspicion of the hour of reckoning. If he who travels much is a gainer in knowledge of mankind, he is sure to be a loser in the charities that sweeten life. Constant intercourse with men who are in the habit of seeing strange faces, who only dispose of their services to those that are likely never to need them again, and who, of necessity, are removed from most of the responsibilities and infirmities of a more permanent intercourse, exhibits the selfishness of our nature in its least attractive form. Policy may suggest a specious blandishment of air, to conceal the ordinary design on the pocket of the stranger ; but it is in the nature of things that the design should exist. The passion of gain, like all other passions, increases with indulgence ; and thus do we find those who dwell on beaten roads more rapacious than those in whom the desire is latent for want of use.

Our host of Duerckheim offered a pledge, in his honest countenance, independent air, and frank manner, of his also being above the usual mercenary schemes of another portion of the craft, who, dwelling in places of little resort, endeavor to take their revenge of fortune, by showing that they look upon every post-carriage as an especial Godsend. He had a garden, too, into which he invited us to enter, while the horses were changing, in a way that showed he was simply desirous of being benevolent, and that he cared little whether we staid an hour or a week. In short, his manner was of an artless, kind, natural, and winning character, that strongly reminded us of home, and which at once established an agreeable confidence that is of an invaluable moral effect. Though too experienced blindly to confide in national characteristics, we liked, too, his appearance of German faith, and more than all were we pleased with the German neatness and comfort, of which there were abundance, unalloyed by the swaggering pretension that neutralizes the same qualities among people more artificial. The house was not a beer-drinking, smoking caravanserai, like many hotels in that quarter of the world, but it had detached pavilions in the gardens, in which the wearied traveller might, in sooth, take his rest. With such inducements before our eyes, we determined to remain, and we were not long in instructing the honest burgher to that effect. The decision was received with great civility, and, unlike the immortal Falstaff, I began to see the prospects of taking "mine ease in my inn" without having a pocket picked.

The carriage was soon housed, and the baggage in the chambers. Notwithstanding the people of the house spoke confidently, but with sufficient modesty, of the state of the larder, it wanted several hours, agreeably to

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our habits, to the time of dinner, though we had enjoyed frequent opportunities of remarking that in Germany a meal is never unseasonable. Disregarding hints, which appeared more suggested by humanity than the love of gain, our usual hour for eating was named, and, by way of changing the subject, I asked,—

"Did I not see some ruins, on the adjoining mountain, as we entered the village?"

"We call Duerckheim a city, mein Herr," rejoined our host of the Ox; "though none of the largest, the time has been when it was a capital!"

Here the worthy burgher munched his pipe and chuckled, for he was a man that had heard of such places as London, and Paris, and Pekin, and Naples, and St. Petersburg, or, haply, of the Federal City itself.

"A capital!—it was the abode of one of the smaller princes, I suppose; of what family was your sovereign, pray?"

"You are right, mein Herr. Duerckheim, before the French revolution, was a residence (for so the political capitals are called in Germany), and it belonged to the princes of Leiningen, who had a palace on the other side of the city (the place may be about half as large as Hudson, or Schenectady), which was burnt in the war. After the late wars, the sovereign was *médiatisé*, receiving an indemnity in estates on the other side of the Rhine."

As this term of *médiatisé* has no direct synonyme in English, it may be well to explain its signification. Germany, as well as most of Europe, was formerly divided into a countless number of petty sovereignties, based on the principle of feudal power. As accident, or talent, or alliances, or treachery advanced the interests of the stronger of these princes, their weaker neighbors began to disappear altogether, or to take new and subordinate stations in the social scale. In this manner has France been gradually composed of its original, but comparatively insignificant kingdom, buttressed, as it now is, by Brittany, and Burgundy, and Navarre, and Dauphiny, and Provence, and Normandy, with many other states; and in like manner has England been formed of the Heptarchy. The confederative system of Germany has continued more or less of this feudal organization to our own times. The formation of the empires of Austria and Prussia has, however, swallowed up many of these principalities, and the changes produced by the policy of Napoleon gave the death-blow, without distinction, to all in the immediate vicinity of the Rhine. Of the latter number were the princes of Leiningen, whose possessions were originally included in the French republic, then in the empire, and have since passed under the sway of the King of Bavaria, who, as the legitimate heir of the neighboring duchy of Deux Ponts, had a nucleus of sufficient magnitude in this portion of Germany to induce the Congress of Vienna to add to his dominions; their object being to erect a barrier against the future aggrandizement of France. As the dispossessed sovereigns are permitted to retain their conventional rank, supplying wives and husbands, at need, to the reigning branches of the different princely families, the term *médiatisé* has been aptly enough applied to their situation.

"The young prince was here, no later than last week," continued our host of the Ox; "he lodged in that pavilion, where he passed several days. You know that he is a son of the Duchess of Kent, and half-brother to the young princess who is likely, one day, to be the queen of England."

"Has he estates here, or is he still, in any way, connected with your government?"

"All they have given him is in money, or on the other side of the Rhine. He went to see the ruins of the old castle; for he had a natural curiosity to look at a place which his ancestors had built."

"It was the ruins of the castle of Leiningen, then, that I saw on the mountain, as we entered the town?"

"No, mein Herr. You saw the ruins of the Abbey of Limburg; those of Hartenburg, for so the castle was called, lie farther back among the hills."

"What! a ruined abbey, and a ruined castle, too!—Here is sufficient occupation for the rest of the day. An abbey and a castle!"

"And the Heidenmauer and the Teufelstein."

"How! a Pagan's Wall and a Devil's Stone!—you are rich in curiosities!"

The host continued to smoke on philosophically.

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"Have you a guide who can take me, by the shortest way, to these places?"

"Any child can do that."

"But one who can speak French is desirable —for my German is far from being classical."

The worthy inn-keeper nodded his head.

"Here is one Christian Kinzel," he rejoined, after a moment of thought, "a tailor who has not much custom, and who has lived a little in France; he may serve your turn."

I suggested that the tailor might find it healthful to stretch his knee-joints.

The host of the Ox was amused with the conceit, and he fairly removed the pipe, in order to laugh at his ease. His mirth was hearty, like that of a man without guile.

The affair was soon arranged. A messenger was sent for Christian Kinzel, and taking my little male travelling companion by the hand, I went leisurely ahead, expecting the appearance of the guide. But, as the reader will have much to do with the place about to be described, it may be desirable that he should possess an accurate knowledge of its locality.

Duerckheim lies in that part of Bavaria which is commonly called the circle of the Rhine. The king, of the country named, may have less than half a million of subjects in this detached part of his territories, which extends in one course from the river to Rhenish Prussia, and in the other from Darmstadt to France. It requires a day of hard posting to traverse this province in any direction, from which it would appear that its surface is about equal to two-thirds of that of Connecticut. A line of mountains, resembling the smaller spurs of the Alleghanies, and which are known by different local names, but which are a branch of the Vosges, passes nearly through the centre of the district, in a north and south course. These mountains cease abruptly on their eastern side, leaving between them and the river, a vast level surface of that description which is called "flats," or "bottom-land," in America. This plain, part of the ancient Palatinate, extends equally on the other side of the Rhine, terminating as abruptly on the eastern as on the western border. In an air-line, the distance between Heidelberg and Duerckheim, which lie opposite to each other on the two lateral extremities of the plain, may a little exceed twenty miles, the Rhine running equidistant from both. There is a plausible theory, which says that the plain of the Palatinate was formerly a lake, receiving the waters of the Rhine, and of course discharging them by some inferior outlet, until time, or a convulsion of the earth, broke through the barrier of the mountains at Bingen, draining off the waters, and leaving the fertile bottom described. Irregular sand-hills were visible, as we approached Duerckheim, which may go to confirm this supposition, for the prevalence of northerly winds might easily have cast more of these light particles on the southwestern than on the opposite shore. By adding that the eastern face of the mountains, or that next to the plain, is sufficiently broken and irregular to be beautiful, while it is always distinctly marked and definite, enough has been said to enable us to proceed with intelligence.

It would appear that one of the passes that has communicated, from time immemorial, between the Rhine and the country west of the Vosges, issues on the plain through the gorge near Duerckheim. By following the windings of the valleys, the post-road penetrates, by an easy ascent, to the highest ridge, and following the water-courses that run into the Moselle, descends nearly as gradually into the duchy of Deux Ponts, on the other side of the chain. The possession of this pass, therefore, in the ages of lawlessness and violence, was, in itself, a title to distinction and power; since all who journeyed by it, lay in person and effects more or less at the mercy of the occupant.

On quitting the town, my little companion and myself immediately entered the gorge. The pass itself was narrow, but a valley soon opened to the width of a mile, out of which issued two or three passages, besides that by which we had entered, though only one of them preserved its character for any distance. The capacity of this valley, or basin, as it must have been when the Palatinate was a lake, is much curtailed by an insulated mountain, whose base, covering a fourth of the area, stands in its very centre, and which doubtless was an island when the valley was a secluded bay. The summit of this mountain or island-hill is level, of an irregularly oval form, and contains some six or eight

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acres of land. Here stand the ruins of Limburg, the immediate object of our visit.

The ascent was exceedingly rapid, and of several hundred feet; reddish free-stone appeared everywhere through the scanty soil, the sun beat powerfully on the rocks; and I was beginning to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of proceeding, when the tailor approached, with the zeal of new-born courage.

"Voici Christian Kinzel!" exclaimed ——, to whom novelty was always an incentive, and who, in his young life, had eagerly mounted Alp and Apennine, Jura and Calabrian hill, tower, monument, and dome, or whatever else served to raise him in the air; "Allons,—grimpons!"

We scrambled up the hill-side, and, winding among terraces on which the vine and vegetables were growing, soon reached the natural platform. There was a noble view from the summit, but it would be premature to describe it here. The whole surface of the hill furnished evidence of the former extent of the Abbey, a wall having encircled the entire place; but the principal edifices had been built, and still remained, near the longitudinal centre, on the very margin of the eastern precipice. Enough was standing to prove the ancient magnificence of the structure. Unlike most of the ruins which border the Rhine, the masonry was of a workmanlike kind, the walls being not only massive, but composed of the sand-stone just mentioned neatly hewn, for immense strata of the material exist in all this region. I traced the chapel, still in tolerable preservation, the refectory, that never-failing solacer of monastic seclusion, several edifices apparently appropriated to the dormitories, and some vestiges of the cloisters. There is also a giddy tower, of an ecclesiastical form, that sufficiently serves to give a character to the ruins. It was closed, to prevent idlers from incurring foolish risks by mounting the crazy steps; but its having formerly been appropriated to the consecrated bells was not at all doubtful. There is also a noble arch near, with several of its disjointed stones menacing the head of him who ventures beneath.

Turning from the ruin, I cast a look at the surrounding valley. Nothing could have been softer or more lovely than the near view. That sort of necessity, which induces us to cherish any stinted gift, had led the inhabitants to turn every foot of the bottom-land to the best account. No Swiss Alp could have been more closely shaved than the meadows at my feet, and a good deal had been made of two or three rivulets that meandered among them. The dam of a rustic mill threw back the water into a miniature lake, and some zealous admirer of Neptune had established a beer-house on its banks, which was dignified with the sign of the Anchor. But the principal object in the interior or upland view was the ruins of a castle, that occupied a natural terrace, or rather the projection of a rock, against the side of one of the nearest mountains. The road passed immediately beneath its walls, a short arrow-flight from the battlements, the position having evidently been chosen as the one best adapted to command the ordinary route of the traveller. I wanted no explanation from the guide to know that this was the castle of Hartenburg. It was still more massive than the remains of the Abbey, built of the same material, and seemingly in different centuries; for while one part was irregular and rude, like most of the structures of the middle ages, there were salient towers filled with embrasures, for the use of artillery. One of their guns, well elevated, might possibly have thrown its shot on the platform of the Abbey-hill, but with little danger even to the ruined walls.

After studying the different objects in this novel and charming scene, for an hour, I demanded of the guide some account of the Pagan's Wall and of the Devil's Stone. Both were on the mountain that lay on the other side of the ambitious little lake, a long musket-shot from the Abbey. It was even possible to see a portion of the former, from our present stand; and the confused account of the tailor only excited a desire to see more. We had not come on this excursion without a fit supply of road-books and maps. One of the former was accidentally in my pocket, though so little had we expected anything extraordinary on this unfrequented road, that as yet it had not been opened. On consulting its pages now, I was agreeably disappointed in finding that Duerckheim and its antiquities had not been

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thought unworthy of the traveller's especial attention. The Pagan's Wall was there stated to be the spot in which Attila passed the winter before crossing the Rhine, in his celebrated inroad against the capital of the civilized world, though its origin was referred to his enemies themselves. In short, it was believed to be the remains of a Roman camp, one of those advanced works of the empire, by which the Barbarians were held in check, and of which the Hun had casually and prudently availed himself, in his progress south. The Devil's Stone was described as a natural rock, in the vicinity of the encampment, on which the Pagans had offered sacrifices. Of course the liberated limbs of the guide were put in requisition, to conduct us to a spot that contained curiosities so worthy of even his exertions.

As we descended the mountain of Limburg, Christian Kinzel lighted the way, by relating the opinions of the country concerning the places we had seen and were about to see. It would appear by this legend, that when the pious monks were planning their monastery, a compact was made with the Devil to quarry the stones necessary for so extensive a work, and to transport them up the steep acclivity. The inducement held forth to the evil spirit, for undertaking a work of this nature, was the pretence of erecting a tavern, in which, doubtless, undue quantities of Rhenish wine were to be quaffed, cheating human reason, and leaving the undefended soul more exposed to the usual assaults of temptation. It would seem, by the legends of the Rhine, that the monks often succeeded in outwitting the arch foe in this sort of compact, though perhaps never with more signal success than in the bargain in question. Completely deceived by the artifices of the men of God, the father of sin lent himself to the project with so much zeal, that the Abbey and its appendages were completed in a time incredibly short; a circumstance that his employers took good care to turn to account, after their own fashion, by ascribing it to a miracle of purer emanation. By all accounts the deception was so well managed, that, notwithstanding his proverbial cunning, the Devil never knew the true destination of the edifice until the Abbey-bell actually rang for prayers. Then, indeed, his indignation knew no bounds, and he proceeded forthwith to the rock in question, with the fell intent of bringing it into the air above the chapel, and by its fall, of immolating the monks and their altar together, to his vengeance. But the stone was too firmly rooted to be displaced even by the Devil; and he was finally compelled, by the prayers of the devotees, who were now, after their own fashion of fighting, fairly in the field, to abandon this portion of the country in shame and disgrace. The curious are shown certain marks on the rock, which go to prove the violent efforts of Satan, on this occasion, and among others the prints of his form, left by seating himself on the stone, fatigued by useless exertions. The more ingenious even trace, in a sort of groove, evidence of the position of his tail, during the time the baffled spirit was chewing the cud of chagrin on his hard stool.

We were at the foot of the second mountain when Christian Kinzel ended this explanation.

"And such is your Duerckheim tradition concerning the Devil's Stone?" I remarked, measuring the ascent with the sight.

"Such is what is said in the country, mein Herr," returned the tailor; "but there are people, hereabouts, who do not believe it."

My little travelling companion laughed, and his eyes danced with expectation.

"Allons, grimpons!" he cried again—"Allons voir ce Teufelstein!"

In a suitable time we were in the camp. It lay on an advanced spur of the mountain, a sort of salient bastion made by Nature, and was completely protected on every side, but that at which it was joined to the mass, by declivities so steep as to be even descended with some pain. There was the ruin of a circular wall, half a league in extent, the stones lying in a confused pile around the whole exterior, and many vestiges of foundations and intersecting walls within. The whole area was covered with a young growth of dark and melancholy cedars. On the face exposed to the adjoining mountain, there had evidently been the additional protection of a ditch.

The Teufelstein was a thousand feet from the camp. It is a weather-worn rock, that shows its bare head from a high point in the more advanced ranges of the hills. I took a

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seat on its most elevated pinnacle, and for a moment the pain of the ascent was forgotten.

The plain of the Palatinate, far as eye could reach, lay in the view. Here and there the Rhine and the Neckar glittered like sheets of silver, among the verdure of the fields, and towers of city and of town, of Manheim, Spires, and Worms, of nameless villages, and of German residences, were as plenty in the scene as tombs upon the Appian Way. A dozen gray ruins clung against the sides of the mountains of Baden and Darmstadt, while the castle of Heidelberg was visible, in its romantic glen, sombre, courtly, and magnificent. The landscape was German, and in its artificial parts slightly Gothic; it wanted the warm glow, the capricious outlines and seductive beauty of Italy, and the grandeur of the Swiss valleys and glaciers; but it was the perfection of fertility and industry embellished by a crowd of useful objects.

It was easy for one thus placed, to fancy himself surrounded by so many eloquent memorials of the progress of civilization, of the infirmities and constitution, of the growth and ambition of the human mind. The rock recalled the age of furious superstition and debased ignorance—the time when the country lay in forest, over which the hunter ranged at will, contending with the beast for the mastery of his savage domain. Still the noble creature bore the image of God, and occasionally some master mind pierced the shades, catching glimpses of that eternal truth which pervades Nature. Then followed the Roman, with his gods of plausible attributes, his ingenious and specious philosophy, his accumulated and borrowed art, his concerted and overwhelming action, his love of magnificence, so grand in its effects, but so sordid and unjust in its means, and last, the most impressive of all, that beacon-like ambition which wrecked his hopes on the sea of its vastness, with the evidence of the falsity of his system as furnished in his fall. The memorial before me showed the means by which he gained and lost his power. The Barbarian had been taught, in the bitter school of experience, to regain his rights, and, in the excitement of the moment, it was not difficult to imagine the Huns pouring into the camp, and calculating their chances of success by the vestiges they found of the ingenuity and resources of their foes.

The confusion of misty images that succeeded was an apt emblem of the next age. Out of this obscurity, after the long and glorious reign of Charlemagne, arose the baronial castle, with feudal violence and its progeny of wrongs. Then came the abbey, an excrescence of that mild and suffering religion, which had appeared on earth, like a ray of the sun, eclipsing the factitious brilliancy of a scene from which natural light had been excluded for a substitute of a meretricious and deceptive quality. Here arose the long and selfish strife, between antagonist principles, that has not yet ceased. The struggle was between the power of knowledge and that of physical force. The former, neither pure nor perfect, descended to subterfuge and deceit; while the latter vacillated between the dread of unknown causes and the love of domination. Monk and baron came in collision; this secretly distrusting the faith he professed, and that trembling at the consequences of the blow which his own sword had given; the fruits of too much knowledge in one, and of too little in the other, while both were the prey of those incessant and unwearied enemies of the race, the greedy passions.

A laugh from the child drew my attention to the foot of the rock. He and Christian Kinzel had just settled, to their mutual satisfaction, the precise position that had been occupied by the Devil's tail. A more suitable emblem of his country than that boy, could not have been found on the whole of its wide surface. As secondary to the predominant English or Saxon stock, the blood of France, Sweden, and Holland ran, in nearly equal currents, in his veins. He had not far to seek, to find among his ancestors the peaceful companion of Penn, the Huguenot, the Cavalier, the Presbyterian, the follower of Luther and of Calvin. Chance had even deepened the resemblance; for, a wanderer from infancy, he now blended languages in merry comments on his recent discovery. The train of thought that his appearance suggested was natural. It embraced the long and mysterious concealment of so vast a portion of the earth as America, from the acquaintance of civilized man; its discovery

and settlement; the manner in which violence and persecution, civil wars, oppression and injustice, had thrown men of all nations upon its shores; the effects of this collision of customs and opinions, unenthralled by habits and laws of selfish origin; the religious and civil liberty that followed; the novel but irrefutable principle on which its government was based; the silent working of its example, in the two hemispheres, one of which had already imitated the institutions that the other was struggling to approach; and all the immense results that were dependent on this inscrutable and grand movement of Providence. I know not indeed but my thoughts might have approached the sublime, had not Christian Kinzel interrupted them, by pointing out the spot where the Devil had kicked the stone, in his anger.

Descending from the perch, we took the path to Duerckheim. As we came down the mountain, the tailor had many philosophical remarks to make, that were chiefly elicited by the forlorn condition of one who had much toil and little food. In his view of things, labor was too cheap, and wine and potatoes were too dear. To what depth he might have pushed reflections bottomed on principles so natural, it is impossible to say, had not the boy started some doubts concerning the reputed length of the Devil's tail. He had visited the Jardin des Plantes at Paris, seen the kangaroos in the Zoological Garden in London, and was familiar with the inhabitants of a variety of caravans encountered at Rome, Naples, Dresden, and other capitals; with the bears of Berne he had actually been on the familiar terms of a friendly visiting acquaintance. Having also some vague ideas of the analogies of things, he could not recall any beast so amply provided with such an elongation of the dorsal bone as was to be inferred from Christian Kinzel's gutter in the Teufelstein. During the discussion of this knotty point we reached the inn.

The host of the Ox had deceived us in nothing. The viands were excellent, and abundant to prodigality. The bottle of old Duerckheimer might well have passed for Johannisberger, or for that still more delicious liquor, Steinberger, at London or New York; and the simple and sincere civility with which everything was served, gave a zest to all.

It would have been selfish to recruit nature without thought of the tailor, after so many hours of violent exercise in the keen air of the mountains. He, too, had his cup and his viands, and when both were invigorated by these natural means, we held a conference, to which the worthy post-master was admitted.

The following pages are the offspring of the convocation held in the parlor of the Ox. Should any musty German antiquary discover some immaterial anachronism, a name misplaced in the order of events, or a monk called prematurely from purgatory, he is invited to wreak his just indignation on Christian Kinzel, whose body and soul may St. Benedict of Limburg protect, for evermore, against all critics.

CHAPTER I.

"Stand you both forth now; stroke your chins, and swear by your beards that I am a knave."—*As You Like It.*

THE reader must imagine a narrow and secluded valley, for the opening scene of this tale. The time was that in which the day loses its power, casting a light on objects most exposed, that resembles colors seen through glass slightly stained; a peculiarity of the atmosphere, which, though almost of daily occurrence in summer and autumn, is the source of constant enjoyment to the real lover of Nature. The hue meant is not a sickly yellow but rather a soft and melancholy glory, that lends to the hill-side and copse, to tree and tower, to stream and lawn, those tinges of surpassing loveliness that impart to the close of day its proverbial and soothing charm. The setting sun touched with oblique rays a bit of shaven meadow, that lay in a dell so deep as to owe this parting smile of Nature to an accidental formation of the neighboring eminences, a distant mountain crest, that a flock had cropped and fertilized, a rippling current that glided in the bottom, a narrow beaten path, more worn by hoof than wheel, and a vast range of forest, that swelled and receded from the view, covering leagues of a hill-chase, that even tradition had never peopled. The spot was seemingly as retired as if it had been chosen in one of our own solitudes of the

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wilderness, while it was, in fact, near the centre of Europe, and in the sixteenth century. But, notwithstanding the absence of dwellings, and all the other signs of the immediate presence of man, together with the wooded character of the scene, an American eye would not have been slow to detect its distinguishing features from those which mark the wilds of this country. The trees, though preserved with care, and flourishing, wanted the moss of ages, the high and rocking summit, the variety and natural wildness of the western forest. No mouldering trunk lay where it had fallen, no branch had been twisted by the gale and forgotten, nor did any upturned root betray the indifference of man to the decay of this important part of vegetation. Here and there, a species of broom, such as is seen occasionally on the mast-heads of ships, was erected above some tall member of the woods that stood on an elevated point; landmarks which divided the rights of those who were entitled to cut and clip; the certain evidence that man had long before extended his sway over these sombre hills, and that, retired as they seemed, they were actually subject to all the divisions, and restraints, and vexations, which, in peopled regions, accompany the rights of property.

For an hour preceding the opening of our tale, not a sound of any nature, beyond that of a murmuring brook, had disturbed the quiet of the silent little valley, if a gorge so narrow, and in truth so wild, deserved the name. There was not even a bird fluttering among the trees, nor a hawk soaring above the heights. Once, and for a minute only, did a roebuck venture from its cover, and descend to the rivulet to drink. The animal had not altogether the elastic bound, the timid and irresolute movement, nor the wandering eye of our own deer, but it was clearly an inhabitant of a forest; for while it in some degree confided in the protection, it also distrusted the power of man. No sooner was its thirst assuaged, than, listening with the keenness of an instinct that no circumstances of accidental condition could destroy, it went up the acclivity again, and sought its cover with troubled steps. At the same instant a greyhound leaped from among the trees, on the opposite side of the gorge, into the path, and began bounding back and forth in the well-known manner of that species of dog, when exercising in restlessness rather than engaged in the hot strife of the chase. A whistle called the hound back from its gambols, and its master entered the path.

A cap of green velvet, bearing a hunting-horn above the shade, a coarse but neat frock of similar color, equally ornamented with the same badge of office, together with the instrument itself suspended from a shoulder, and the arms usual to one of that class, denoted a forester, or an individual charged with the care of the chase, and otherwise intrusted with a jurisdiction in the forest; functions that would be much degraded by the use of the abused and familiar term of gamekeeper.

The forester was young, active, and, notwithstanding the rudeness of his attire, of a winning exterior. Laying his fusee against the root of a tree, he whistled in the dog, and renewing the call, by means of a shrill instrument that was carried for that purpose, he soon succeeded in bringing its fellow to his side. Coupling the greyhounds in a leash, which he attached to his own person, he threw the horn from its noose, and blew a lively and short strain, that rolled up the valley in mellow and melodious notes. When the instrument was removed from his lips, the youth listened till the last of the distant echoes was done, as if expecting some reply. He was not disappointed. Presently an answering blast came down the gorge, ringing among the woods, and causing the hearts of many of its tenants to beat quick and fearfully. The sounds of the unseen instrument were far more shrill and wild than those of the hunting-horn, while they wanted not for melancholy sweetness. They appeared both familiar and intelligible to the young forester, who no sooner heard them, than he slung the horn in its usual turn of the cord, resumed the fusee, and stood in an attitude of expectation.

It might have been a minute before another youth appeared in the path, higher in the gorge, and advancing slowly toward the forester. His dress was rustic, and altogether that of a peasant, while in his hand he held a long, straight, narrow tube of cherry wood, firmly wrapped with bark, having a mouth-piece and a small bell at the

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opposite end, resembling those of a trumpet. As he came forward, his face was not without an expression of ill-humor, though it was rather rendered comic than grave, by a large felt hat, the front rim of which fell in an enormous shade above his eyes, rendering the trim cock in the rear, ludicrously pretending. His legs, like those of the forester, were encased in a sort of leathern hose, that left the limbs naked and free below the knee, while the garment above set so loosely and unbuttoned above that important joint, as to offer no restraint to his movements.

"Thou art behind thy time, Gottlob," said the young forester, as the boor approached, "and the good hermit will not give us better welcome for keeping him from prayer. What has become of thy herd?"

"That may the holy man of the Heidenmauer declare, for it is more than I could answer were Lord Emich himself to put the question, and say, in the manner he is wont to use to the Abbot of Limburg—What hath become of thy herd, Gottlob?"

"Nay, this is no trifling matter, if thou hast, in sooth, let the cattle stray! Where hadst thou the beasts last in sight?"

"Here in the forest of Hartenburg, Master Berchthold, on the honor of an humble servitor of the Count."

"Thou wilt yet lose this service, Gottlob, by thy carelessness!"

"It would be a thousand pities were thy words to be true, for in that case Lord Emich would lose the honestest cow-herd in Germany, and it would go near to break my heart were the friars of Limburg to get him! But the beasts cannot be far, and I will try the virtue of the horn once more, before I go home to a broken head and a discharge. Dost thou know, Master Berchthold, that the disgrace of which thou speakest never yet befell any of my family, and we have been keepers of cattle longer than the Friedrichs have been electors?"

The forester made an impatient gesture, patted his hounds, and waited for the effects of the new blast, that his companion was by this time preparing to sound. The manner of Gottlob was that of entire confidence in his own knowledge of his calling, for notwithstanding his words, his countenance at no time betrayed uneasiness for the fate of his trust. The valley was soon ringing with the wild and plaintive tones of the cherry-wood horn, the hind taking care to give the strains those intonations, which, by a mute convention, had from time immemorial been understood as the signal for collecting a lost herd. His skill and faith were soon rewarded, for cow after cow came leaping out of the forest, as he blew his air, and ere long the necessary number of animals were in the path, the younger beasts frisking along the way, with elevated tails and awkward bounds, while the more staid contributors of the dairy hurried on, with business-like air but grave steps, as better became their years and their characters in the hamlet. In a few minutes they were all collected around the person of the keeper, who, having counted his charge, shouldered his horn, and disposed himself to proceed toward the lower extremity of the gorge.

"Thou art lucky to have gotten the beasts together, with so little trouble, Gottlob," resumed the forester, as they followed in the train of the herd.

"Say dexterous, Master Berchthold, and do not fear to make me vain-glorious. In the way of understanding my own merits there is little danger of doing me harm. Thou should'st never discourage modesty, by an over-scrupulous discretion. It would be a village miracle, were a herd so nurtured in the ways of the church to forget its duty!"

The forester laughed, but he looked aside, like one who would not see that to which he wished to be blind.

"At thy old tricks, friend Gottlob! Thou hast let the beasts roam upon the range of the friars!"

"I have paid Peter's pence, been to the chapel of St. Benedict for prayer, confessed to Father Arnolph himself, and all within the month: what more need a man do, to be in favor with the Brothers?"

"I could wish to know if thou ever entertainest Father Arnolph with the history of thy visits to the pastures of the convent, with Lord Emich's herd, honest Gottlob."

"So! Dost thou fancy, Master Berchthold, that, at a moment when there is every necessity to possess a calm and contemplative spirit, I should strive to put the pious monk in a passion, by relating all the antics of some

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ill-bred cow, or of a heifer, who is as little to be trusted without a keeper, as your jungfrau before she reaches the years of caution is to be trusted at a fair without her mother, or a sharp-sighted old aunt, at the very least?"

"Well, have a care, Gottlob, for Lord Emich, though loving the friars so little, will be apt to order thee into a dungeon, on bread and water for a week, or to make thy back acquainted with the lash, should he come to hear that one of his hinds has taken this liberty with the rights of a neighbor."

"Let Lord Emich then expel the brotherhood from the richest pasturage near the Jaegerthal. Flesh and blood cannot bear to see the beasts of a noble digging into the earth with their teeth, after a few bitter herbs, while the carrion of a convent are rolling the finest and sweetest grasses over their tongues. Look you, Master Berchthold, these friars of Limburg eat the fattest venison, drink the warmest wine, and say the shortest prayers of any monks in Christendom! Potztausend! There are some who accuse them, too, of shriving the prettiest girls! As for bread and water, and a dungeon, I know from experience that neither of the remedies agrees with a melancholy constitution, and I defy the Emperor, or even the Holy Father himself, to work such a miracle as to make back of mine acquainted with the lash."

"Simply because the introduction hath long since had place."

"That is thy interpretation of the matter, Master Berchthold, and I wish thee joy of a quick wit. But we are getting beyond the limits of the forest, and we will dismiss the question to another conversation. The beasts are full, and will not disappoint the dairy-girls, and little matters it whence the nourishment comes—Lord Emich's pastures or a churchly miracle. Thou hast hunted the dogs lightly to-day, Berchthold?"

"I have had them on the mountains for air and movement. They got away on the heels of a roebuck for a short run, but as all the game in this chase belongs to our master, I did not see fit to let them go faster than there was need."

"I rejoice to hear thee say it, for I count upon thy company in climbing the mountain when our work is ended; thy legs will only be the fresher for the toil."

"Thou hast my word, and I will not fail thee; in order that no time be lost, we will part here to meet again in the hamlet."

The forester and the cow-herd made signs of leave-taking, and separated. The former quitted the public road, turning short to the right by a private way, which led him across narrow meadows, and the little river that glided among them, toward the foot of the opposite mountain. Gottlob held on his course to a hamlet that was now visible, and which completely filled a narrow pass in the valley, at a point where the latter made a turn, nearly at a right angle with its general direction.

The path of the former led him to a habitation very different from the rude dwellings toward which the steps of the cow-herd tended. A massive castle occupied a projecting point af the mountain, overhanging the cluster of houses in the gorge, and frowning upon all that attempted to pass. The structure was a vast but irregular pile. The more modern parts were circular salient towers, that were built upon the uttermost verge of the rock, from whose battlements it would not have been difficult to cast a stone into the road, and which denoted great attention to strength in their masonry, while beauty of form and of workmanship, as they were understood at the period of which we write, were not entirely neglected. These towers, though large, were mere appendages to the main building, which, seen from the position now before the mind of the reader, presented a confused maze of walls, chimneys, and roofs. In some places, the former rose from the greensward which covered the hill-side; while in others, advantage had been taken of the living rock, which was frequently so blended with the pile it supported, both being of the same reddish freestone, that it was not easy at the first glance to say, what had been done by Nature and what by art.

The path of the forester led from the valley up the mountain, by a gradual and lateral ascent to a huge gate that opened beneath a high arch, communicating with a court within. On this side of the castle there was neither ditch, nor bridge, nor any other of

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the usual defences, beyond a portcullis, for the position of the hold rendered these precautions in a measure unnecessary. Still great care had been taken to prevent a surprise, and it would have required a sure foot, a steady head, and vigorous limbs, to have effected an entrance into the edifice, by any other passage than its gate.

When Berchthold reached the little terrace that lay before the portal, he loosened his horn, and, standing on the verge of the precipice, blew a hunting strain, apparently in glee. The music echoed among the hills as suited the spot, and more than one crone of the hamlet suspended her toil, in dull admiration, to listen to its wild effect. Replacing the instrument, the youth spoke to his hounds and passed beneath the portcullis, which happened to be raised at the moment.

CHAPTER II.

"What sayest thou to a hare, or the melancholy of moor-ditch?"—*King Henry IV.*

THE light had nearly disappeared from the gorge, in which the hamlet of Hartenburg lay, when Berchthold descended from the castle, by a path different from that by which he had entered it an hour before, and crossing the rivulet by a bridge of stone, he ascended the opposite bank into the street, or rather the road. The young forester, having kennelled the hounds, had laid aside his leash and fusee, but he still kept the horn suspended from his shoulder. At his side, too, he carried a couteau-de-chasse, a useful instrument of defence in that age and country, as well as a weapon he was entitled to carry, in virtue of his office under the Count of Leiningen-Hartenburg, the master of the hold he had just quitted, and the feudal lord of most of the adjoining mountains, as well as of sundry villages on the plain of the Palatinate. It would seem that the cow-herd expected his associate, or perhaps we might venture to call him friend, for such in truth did he appear to be, by the easy terms on which they met. Gottlob was in waiting near the cottage of his mother, and when the two joined each other they communicated by a sign, and proceeded with swift steps, leaving the cluster of houses.

Immediately on quitting the hamlet, the valley expanded, and took that character of fertility and cultivation, which has been described to the reader in the Introduction; for all who have perused that opening and necessary preface to our labors, will at once recognize that the two youths introduced to their acquaintance were now in the mountain basin which contained the Abbey of Limburg. But three centuries, while they have effected little in altering the permanent features of the place, have wrought essential changes in those which were more perishable.

As the young men moved swiftly on, the first rays of the moon touched the tops of the mountains, and ere they had gone a mile, always holding the direction of the pass which communicated with the valley of the Rhine, the towers and roofs of the Abbey itself were illuminated. The conventual buildings were then perfect, resembling, by their number and confusion, the grouping of some village, while a strong and massive wall encircled the entire brow of the isolated hill. The construction resembled one of those warlike ecclesiastical princes of the middle ages, who wore armor beneath the stole; for while the towers and painted windows, the pious memorials and votive monuments, denoted the objects of the establishment, the defences betrayed that as much dependence was placed on human as on other means, for the protection of those who composed the brotherhood.

"There is a moon for a monk as well as for a cow-herd, it would seem," observed Gottlob, speaking, however, in a voice subdued nearly to a whisper. "There comes the light upon the high tower of the Abbey, and presently it will be glistening on the bald head of every straggler of the convent, who is abroad tasting the last vintage, or otherwise prying into the affairs of some burgher of Duerckheim!"

"Thou hast not much reverence for the pious fathers, honest Gottlob; for it is seldom thou lettest opportunity pass to do them an ill turn, with tongue or hungry beast."

"Look you, Berchthold, we vassals are little more than so much clear water in which our master may see his own countenance, and at need his own humors. Whenever Lord Emich has a sincere hatred for man or horse, dog or cat, town or village, monk or

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count, I know not why it is so, but I feel my own choler rise, until I am both ready and willing to strike when he striketh, to curse when he curseth, and even to kill when he killeth."

"'Tis a good temper for a servitor, but it is to be hoped, for the sake of Christian credit, that the sympathy does not end here, but that thy affections are as social as thy dislikes."

"More so, as there is faith in man! Count Emich is a huge lover of a venison pasty of a morning, and I feel a yearning for it the day long—Count Emich will despatch you a bottle of Duerckheim in an hour, whereas two would scarce show my zeal for his honor in the same time, and as for other mortifications of this nature, I am not the man to desert my master for want of zeal."

"I believe thee, Gottlob," said Berchthold, laughing, "and even more than thou canst find words to say in thine own favor, on topics like these. But, after all, the Benedictines are churchmen, and sworn to their faith and duty, as well as any bishop in Germany; and I do not see the cause of all the dislike of either lord or vassal."

"Ay, thou art in favor with some of the fraternity, and it is rare that the week passes in which thou art not kneeling before some of their altars; but with me the case is different, for since the penance commanded for that affair of dealing a little freely with one of their herds, I have small digestion for their spiritual food."

"And yet thou hast paid Peter's pence, said thy prayers, and confessed thy sins to Father Arnolph, and all within the month!"

"What wouldst thou have of a sinner? I gave the money on the promise of having it back with usury; I prayed on account of an accursed tooth that torments me, at times, in a manner worse than a damned soul is harrowed; and as to confession, ever since my uncommon candor, concerning the herd, got me into that penance, I confess under favor of a proper discretion. To tell the truth, Master Berchthold, the church is something like a two-year-old wife; pleasant enough when allowed her own way, but a devil of a vixen when folded against her will."

The young forester was thoughtful and silent, and as they were now in the vicinity of the hamlet which belonged to the friars of Limburg, his loquacious and prurient companion saw fit to imitate his reserve, from a motive of prudence. The little artificial lake mentioned in the Introduction was in existence, at the time of our tale; but the inn, with the ambitious sign of the Anchor, is the fruit of far more modern enterprise. When the young men reached a ravine, that opened into the mountain near the present site of this tavern, they turned aside from the high-road, first taking care to observe that no curious eye watched their movements.

Here commenced a long and somewhat painful ascent, by means of a rough path, that was only lighted in spots by the rising moon. The vigorous limbs of the forester and the cow-herd, however, soon carried them to the summit of the most advanced spur of the adjoining mountain, where they arrived upon an open heath-like plain. Although the discourse between them had been maintained during the ascent, it was in more subdued tones even than when beneath the walls of Limburg, the spirits of Gottlob appearing to ooze away the higher he mounted.

"This is a dreary and courage-killing waste, Berchthold," whispered the cow-herd, as his foot touched the level ground; "and it is even more disheartening to enter on it by the aid of the moon, than in the dark. Hast ever been nearer to the Teufelstein, at this hour?"

"I came upon it once at midnight; for it was there I made acquaintance with him that we are now about to visit.—Did I never relate the manner of that meeting?"

"What a habit hast thou of taxing a memory! Perhaps if thou wert to repeat it, I might recall the facts by the time thou wert ended; and to speak truth, thy voice is comfortable on this sprite's common."

The young forester smiled, but without derision, for he saw that his companion, spite of his indifference to all grave subjects, was, as is generally the case, the most affected of the two when put to a serious trial, and perhaps he also remembered the difference that education had made in their powers of thinking. That he did not treat the subject as one of light import himself, was also apparent by

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the regulated and cautious manner in which he delivered the following account.

"I had been on the chases of Lord Emich since the rising of the sun," commenced Berchthold, "for there was need of more than common vigilance to watch the neighboring boors. The search had led me far into the hills, and the night came, not as it is now seen, but so pitchy dark, that, accustomed as I was from childhood to the forest, it was not possible to tell the direction of even a star, much less that of the Castle. For hours I wandered, hoping at each moment to reach the opening of the valley, when I found myself of a sudden in a field that appeared endless and uninhabited."

"Ay—that was this devil's ball-room!—thou meanest untenanted by man."

"Hast thou ever known the helplessness of being lost in the forest, Gottlob?"

"In my own person, never, Master Berchthold; but in that of my herd, it is a misfortune that often befalls me, sinner that I am!"

"I know not that sympathy with thy cows can teach thee the humiliation and depression that come over the mind, when we stand on this goodly earth, cut off from all communication with our fellows, in a desert, though surrounded by living men, deprived of the senses of sight and hearing for useful ends, and with all the signs of God before the eyes, and yet with none of the common means of enjoying his bounty, from having lost the clew to his intentions."

"Must the teeth, of necessity, be idle, or the throat dry, Master Forester, because the path is hid?"

"At such a moment the appetites are quieted, in the grand desire to return to our usual communication with the earth. It is like being restored to the helplessness of infancy, with all the wants and habits of manhood besetting the character and wishes."

"If thou callest such a thing a restoration, friend Berchthold, I shall make interest with St. Benedict that I may remain deposed to the end of my days."

"I weigh not the meaning of every word I utter, with the recollection of that helpless moment so fresh. But it was when the desolate feeling was strongest, that I roved out of the chase upon this mountain heath; there appeared something before my sight, that seemed a house, and by a bright light that glittered, as I fancied, at a window, I felt again restored to intercourse with my kind."

"Thou usest thy terms with more discretion now," said the cow-herd, fetching a heavy breath, like one who was glad the difficulty had found a termination. "I hope it was the abode of some substantial tenant of Lord Emich, who was not without the means of comforting a soul in distress."

"Gottlob, the dwelling was no other than the Teufelstein, and the light was a twinkling star, that chance had brought in a line with the rock."

"I take it for granted, Master Berchthold, thou didst not knock twice for admission at that door!"

"I am not much governed by the vulgar legends and womanish superstitions of our hills, but——"

"Softly—softly—friend Forester; what thou callest by names so irreverent, are the opinions of all who dwell in or about Duerckheim; knight or monk—burgher or count, has equally a respect for our venerable traditions. Tausend Sechs und Zwanziges! what would become of us if we had not a gory tale, or some alarming and reverend spectacle of this sort, to set up against the penances, and prayers, and masses of the Friars of Limburg?—As much wisdom and philosophy as thou wilt, foster-brother of mine, but leave us our Devil, if it be only to make battle against the Abbot!"

"Notwithstanding thy big words, I well know that none among us has, at heart, a greater dread of this very hill than thyself, Gottlob! I have seen thee sweat cold drops from thy forehead, in crossing the heath after night-fall."

"Art quite sure 'twas not the dew? We have heavy falls of that moisture in these hills, when the earth is parched!"

"Let it then be the dew."

"To oblige thee, Berchthold, I would willingly swear it was a water-spout. But what didst thou make of the rock and the star?"

"I could change the nature of neither. I pretend not to thy indifference to the mysterious power that rules the earth, but

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thou well knowest that fear never yet kept me from this hill. When a near approach showed me my error, I was about to turn away, not without crossing myself and repeating an Ave, as I am ready to acknowledge; but a glance upward convinced me that the stone was occupied——"

"Occupied?—I have always known that it was possessed, but never before did I think it was occupied!"

"There was one seated on its uppermost projection, as plainly to be seen as the rock itself."

"Whereupon thou madest manifest that good speed which had gained thee the favor of the Count, and thy post of forester."

"I hope the nerves to put the duties of my office in practice, had their weight with Lord Emich," rejoined Berchthold, a little quickly. "I did not run, Gottlob, but I spoke to the being who had chosen a seat so remarkable, and at that late hour."

Spite of his spirit and affected humor, the cow-herd unconsciously drew nearer to his companion, casting at the same time an oblique glance in the direction of the suspected rock.

"Thou seemest troubled, Gottlob."

"Dost thou think I am without bowels? What, shall a friend of mine be in this strait, and I not troubled? Heaven save thee, Berchthold, were the best cow in my herd off her stomach, I could not be in greater concern. Hadst any answer?"

"I had—and the result has gone to show me," returned the forester, musing as he spoke, like one who was obtaining glimpses of long-concealed truth, "that our fears oftentimes prevent us from seeing things as they are, and are the means of nourishing our mistakes. I got an answer, and certainly, contrary to what most in Duerckheim would have believed, it was given in a human voice."

"That was encouraging, though it were hoarser than the roaring of a bull!"

"It spoke mildly and in reason, Gottlob, as thou wilt readily believe, when I tell thee it was no other than the voice of the Anchorite of the Cedars. Our acquaintance then and there commenced, since which time, as thou knowest well, it hath not flagged for want of frequent visits to his abode, on my part."

The cow-herd walked on in silence, for more than a minute, and then stopping short, he abruptly addressed his companion:—

"And this then hath been thy secret, Berchthold, concerning the manner of commencing on thy new friendship."

"There is no other. I well knew how much thou wert fettered by the opinions of the country, and was afraid of losing thy company in these visits, were I, without caution, to tell all the circumstances of our interview. But now thou hast become known to the anchorite, I do not fear thy desertion."

"Never count upon too many sacrifices from thy friends, Master Berchthold! The mind of man is borne upon by so many fancies, is ruled by so many vagaries, and tormented by so many doubts, when there is question concerning the safety of the body, to say nothing of the soul, that I know no more rash confidence, than to count too securely on the sacrifices of a friend."

"Thou knowest the path, and canst return by thyself, to the hamlet, if thou wilt," said the forester peevishly, and not without severity.

"There are situations in which it is as difficult to go back as to go forward," observed Gottlob; "else, Berchthold, I might take thee at thy word, and go back to my careful mother, a good supper, and a bed that stands between a picture of the Virgin, one of St. Benedict, and one of my Lord the Count. But for my concern for thee, I would not go another foot toward the camp."

"Do as thou wilt," said the forester, who appeared, however, to know the apprehension his companion felt of being left alone in that solitary and suspected spot, and who turned his advantage to good account by quickening his pace in such a manner as would soon have left Gottlob to his own thick-coming fancies, had he not diligently imitated his gait. "Thou canst tell the people of Lord Emich, that thou abandoned'st me on this hill."

"Nay," returned Gottlob, making a merit of necessity, "if I do that or say that, may they make a Benedictine of me, and the Abbot of Limburg to boot!"

As the cow-herd, who felt all his master's antipathies against their religious neighbors, expressed this determination in a voice strong as his resolution, confidence was re-

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stored between the friends, who continued their progress with swift paces. The place was, sooth to say, one every way likely to quicken any dormant seeds of superstition that education, or tradition, or local opinions had implanted in the human breast.

By this time our adventurers had approached a wood of low cedars, which, apparently encircled in a round wall that was composed of a confused but vast pile of fallen stones, grew upon the advanced spur of the hills. Behind them lay the heath-like plain, while the bald rock which the moonbeams had just lighted, raising its head from out of the earth, resembled some gloomy monument placed in the centre of the waste, to mark and to render obvious, by comparison, the dreary solitude of the naked fields. The back-ground was the dark slopes and ridges of the forest of the Haart mountains. On their right was the glen, or valley, from which they had just ascended ; and on their front, looking a little obliquely from the grove, the plain of the Palatinate, which lay in misty obscurity, like a dim sea of cultivation, hundreds of feet beneath their elevated stand.

It was rare, indeed, that any immediate dependant of the Count Emich, and more especially any of those who dwelt in or about his castle, and who were likely to be called into his service at an unexpected moment, ventured so far from the fortress, and in the direction of the hostile Abbey, without providing himself with the means of offence and defence. Berchthold wore, as wont, his hunting-knife, or the short straight sword which to this day is carried by that description of European dependant called a chasseur, and who is seen, degraded to the menial offices of a footman, standing behind the carriages of ambassadors and princes, reminding the observant spectator of the regular and certain decadency of the usages of feudal times. Neither had Gottlob been neglectful of his personal security, as respects human foes ; for on the subject of resisting all such attacks, his manhood was above reproach, as had been proved in more than one of those bloody frays which in that age were of frequent occurrence between the vassals of the minor German princes. The cow-herd had provided himself with a heavy weapon that his father had often wielded in battle, and which needed all the vigor of the muscular arm of the son, to flourish with a due observance of the required positions and attitudes. Fire-arms were of too much value and of too imperfect use to be resorted to on every light occasion, like that which had now drawn the foster-brothers, for such supported by long habit was the secret of the intimacy between the forester and the cow-herd, from their hamlet to the hill of Duerckheim.

Berchthold loosened his couteau-de-chasse, as he turned by an ancient gate-way, whose position was known merely by an interruption of the ditch that had protected this face of the wall, and an opening in the wall itself, to enter the inclosure, which the reader will at once recognize as the Pagan's Camp of the Introduction. At the same moment Gottlob cast his heavy weapon from his shoulder, and grasped its handle in a more scientific manner. There was certainly no enemy visible to justify these movements, but the increasing solitude of the place, and that impression of danger which besets the faculties when we find ourselves in situations favorable to deeds of violence, probably induced the double and common caution. The light of the moon, which was not yet full, had not sufficient power to penetrate the thick branches of the cedars ; and when the youths were fairly beneath the gloomy foliage, although not left in the ordinary darkness of a clouded night, they were perhaps in that very species of dull and misty illumination, which, by leaving objects uncertain while visible, is the best adapted to undermine the confidence of a distrustful spirit. There was little wind, but the sighs of the night air were plaintively audible, while the adventurers picked their way among the fragments of the place.

It has been elsewhere said, that the Heidenmauer was originally a Roman camp. The warlike and extraordinary people who had erected these advanced works on the remotest frontier of their wide empire, had, of course, neglected none of the means that were necessary, under the circumstances, either for their security or for their comfort. The first had been sufficiently obtained by the nearly isolated position of the

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hill, protected, as it was, by walls so massive and so high as those must have been, which had consumed the quantity of materials still visible in the large circuit that remained; while the interior furnished abundant proofs that the latter had not been neglected, in its intersecting remains, over which Gottlob more than once stumbled, as he advanced into the shadows of the place. Here and there, a ruined habitation, more or less dilapidated, was still standing, furnishing, like the memorable remains of Pompeii and Herculaneum, interesting and infallible evidence of the usages of those who have so long since departed to their eternal rest. It would seem, by the rude repairs which rather injured than embellished these touching though simple monuments of what the interior of the camp had been in its days of power and pride, that modern adventurers had endeavored to turn them to account, by converting the falling huts into habitations appropriated to their own temporary uses. All, however, appeared to have been long before finally abandoned; for as Berchthold and his companion stole cautiously among the crumbling stones, the gaping rents and roofless walls denoted hopeless decay. At length the youths paused, and fastened their looks in a common direction, as if apprised that they were near the goal of their expedition.

In a part of the grove where the cedars grew more dense and luxuriant than on most of that stony and broken soil, stood a single low building, which, of all there, had the air of being still habitable. Like the others, it either had been originally constructed by the masters of the world, or restored on the foundations of some Roman construction by the followers of Attila, who, it will be remembered, had passed a winter in this camp; and it was now rendered weather-proof by the usual devices of the poor and laborious. There was a single window, a door, and a rude chimney, which the climate and the elevated situation of the place rendered nearly indispensable. The light of a dim torch shone through the former, the only sign that the hut was tenanted; for on the exterior, with the exception of the rough repairs just mentioned, all around it lay in the neglected and eloquent stillness of ruin. The reader will not imagine, in this description, any of that massive grandeur which so insensibly attaches itself to most that is connected with the Roman name; for while, in the nature of things, the most ponderous and the most imposing of the public works of that people are precisely those which are the most likely to have descended to our own times, the traveller often meets with memorials of their power that are so frail and perishable in their construction, as to owe their preservation, in a great measure, to an accidental combination of circumstances favorable to such a result. Still, the Roman was ordinarily as much greater in little things, if connected with a public object, as he excelled all who have succeeded him, in those which were of more importance. The Ringmauer, or Heidenmauer, is a strong proof of what we say. There is not an arch, nor a tomb, nor a gate, nor a paved road of any description in the vicinity of Duerckheim, to show that the post was more than a temporary military position; and yet the presence of its former occupants is established by more evidences than would probably be found, a century hence, were half of the present cities of Christendom to be suddenly abandoned. But these evidences are rude and suited to the objects which had brought them into existence.

The forester and the cow-herd stood long regarding the solitary hut, which had arrested their looks, like men hesitating to proceed.

"I had more humor for the company of the honest anchorite, Master Berchthold," said the latter, "before thou madest me acquainted with his fondness for taking the night air on the Teufelstein."

"Thou hast not fear, Gottlob? Thou, who bearest so good a name for courage among our youths!"

"I shall be the last to accuse myself of cowardice or of any other discreditable quality, friend forester, but prudence is a virtue in a youth, as the Abbot of Limburg himself would swear, were he here——"

"He is not present in his own reverend and respected person," said a voice so nigh the ear of Gottlob, as to cause him to jump nimbly aside; "but one who may humbly represent some portion of his sanctity, is not

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wanting to affirm the truth of what thou sayest, son."

The startled young men saw that a monk of the opposite mountain had unexpectedly appeared between them. They were on the lands of the Abbey, or rather on ground in dispute between the burghers of Duerckheim and the convent, but actually in possession of the latter; and they felt the insecurity of their situation as the dependants of the Count of Hartenburg. Neither spoke, therefore, for each was striving to invent some plausible pretext for his appearance in a place so unfrequented, and which, in general, was held in so little favor by the neighboring peasantry.

"You are youths of Duerckheim?" asked the monk, endeavoring to observe their features by the imperfect light that penetrated the foliage of the dark cedars. Gottlob, whose besetting infirmity was a too exuberant fluency of tongue, took on himself the task of answering.

"We are youths, reverend father," he said, "as thy quick and sagacious sight hath so well seen. I will not deny my years, and if I would, the Devil, who besets all between fifteen and five-and-twenty in the shape of some giddy infirmity, would soon betray the imposture."

"Of Duerckheim, son?"

"As there is question between the Abbey and the town concerning these hills, we might not stand any better in thy favor, holy Benedictine, were we to say yes."

"In that suspicion thou dost little justice to the Abbey, son; we may defend the rights of the Church, confided in their temporalities as they are to an unworthy and sinful brotherhood, without feeling any uncharitableness against those who believe they have claims better than our own. The love of mammon is feeble in bosoms that are devoted to self-denying and repentant lives. Say then boldly that you are of Duerckheim, and dread not my displeasure."

"Since it is thy good pleasure, benevolent monk, I will say boldly that we are of Duerckheim."

"And you come to consult the holy Anchorite of the Cedars?"

"It is not necessary that I should tell one of thy knowledge of human nature, reverend Benedictine, that the failing of all dwellers in small towns is an itching to look into the affairs of their neighbors. Himmel! If our worthy burgomasters would spare a little time from the affairs of other people to look into their own, we should all be greatly gainers; they in their property, and we in our comfort!"

The Benedictine laughed, and he motioned for the youths to follow, advancing himself toward the hut.

"Since you have given yourselves this trouble, no doubt with a praiseworthy and pious intention, my sons," he said, "let not respect for my presence change your purpose. We will go into the cell of the holy hermit, in company; and if there should be advantage from his blessing, or discourse, believe me, I will not be so unjust as to envy either of you a share."

"The manner in which the friars of Limburg deny themselves advantages, in order to do profit to their fellow-Christians, is in the mouths of all, far and near; and this generosity of thine, reverend monk, is quite of a piece with the well-earned reputation of the whole brotherhood."

As Gottlob spoke gravely, and bowed with sufficient reverence, the Benedictine was in a slight degree his dupe; though, as he passed beneath the low portal of the hut, he could not prevent a lurking suspicion of the truth.

CHAPTER III.

"He comes at last in sullen loneliness,
And whence they know not, why they need not guess."—*Lara.*

In those days in which mortal wrongs were chiefly repaired by superstition, and the slaves of the grosser passions believed they were only to be rebuked by signal acts of physical self-denial, the world often witnessed examples of men retiring from its allurements, to caves and huts, for the ostensible purposes of penitence and prayer. That this extraordinary pretension to godliness was frequently the cloak of ambition and deceit is certain, but it would be uncharitable to believe that, in common, it did not proceed from an honest, though it might be an ill-directed, zeal. Hermitages are still far from

infrequent in the more southern parts of Europe, though they are of rare occurrence in Germany; but previously to the change of religion which occurred in the sixteenth century, and consequently near the period of this tale, they were perhaps more often met with among the descendants of the northern race, than among the more fervid fancies of the southern stock of that quarter of the world. It is a law of Nature that the substances which most easily receive impressions are the least likely to retain them; and possibly there may be requisite a constancy and severity of character to endure the never-ending and mortifying exactions of the anchorite, that were not so easily found among the volatile and happy children of the sun, as among the sterner offspring of the regions of cold and tempests.

Whatever may be said of the principles of him who thus abandoned worldly ease for the love of God, it is quite sure that, in practice, there were present and soothing rewards in this manner of life, that were not without strong attractions to morbid minds; especially to those in which the seeds of ambition were dormant rather than extinct. It was rare, indeed, that a recluse established himself in the vicinity of a simple and religious neighborhood, and few were they who sought absolute solitude, without reaping a rich harvest of veneration and moral dependence among the untrained minds of his admirers. In this treacherous manner does vanity beset us in our strongholds of mental security, and he who has abandoned the world, in the hope of leaving behind him those impulses which endangered his hopes, finds the enemy in a new shape, intrenched in the very citadel of his defences. There is little merit, and commonly as little safety, in turning the back on any danger, and he has far less claims to the honors of a hero who outlives the contest in consequence of means so questionable, than he who survives because he has given a mortal blow to his antagonist. The task assigned to man is to move among his fellows doing good, filling his part in the scale of creation, and escaping from none of the high duties which God has allotted to his being; and greatly should he be grateful, that, while his service is arduous, he is not left without the powerful aid of that intelligence which controls the harmony of the universe.

The Anchorite of the Cedars, as the recluse now visited by the monk and his accidental companions was usually termed by the peasants, and by the burghers of Duerckheim, had made his appearance about six months before the opening of our story, in the Ringmauer. Whence he had come, how long he intended to remain, and what had been his previous career, were facts equally unknown to those among whom he so suddenly took up his abode. None had seen him arrive, nor could any say from what sources he drew the few articles of household furniture which were placed in his hut. They who left the camp untenanted one week, on returning the next, had found it occupied by a man, who had arranged one of the deserted buildings in a manner to shelter him from the storms, and who, by erecting a crucifix at his door, had sufficiently announced the motive of his retirement. It was usual to hail the establishment of a hermit in any particular district, as a propitious event; and many were the hopes excited, and plans of effecting temporal objects concocted, by the intervention of the prayers of the stranger, before his presence had been known a fortnight. All within the influence of the name of the hermit, except Emich of Leiningen-Hartenburg, the burgomaster of Duerckheim, and the monks of Limburg, heard of his arrival with satisfaction. The haughty and warlike baron had imbibed a standing prejudice against all devotees, from an inherited enmity to the adjoining convent, which had contested the sovereignty of the valley with his family for ages; while the magistrate had a latent jealousy of every influence which custom and the laws had not rendered familiar. As to the monks, the secret of their distrust was to be found in that principle of human nature, which causes us to dislike being outdone in any merit of which we make an especial profession, even though superior godliness be its object. Until now the Abbot of Limburg was held to be the judge, in the last resort, of all intercessions between earth and heaven; and as his supremacy had the support of time, he had long enjoyed it in that careless security which lures so many of the prosperous to their downfall.

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These antipathies on the part of the honored and powerful might, to say the least, have rendered the life of the anchorite very uncomfortable, if not positively insecure, were it not for the neutralizing effect of the antagonistic forces which were set in motion. Opinion, deepened by superstition, held its shield over the humble hut, and month after month glided away, after the arrival of the stranger, during which he received no other testimonials of the feelings excited by his presence, than those connected with the reverence of the bulk of the population. An accidental communication with Berchthold was ripening into intimacy, and, as will be seen in the course of the narrative, there were others to whom his counsel, or his motives, or his prayers, were not indifferent.

The latter fact was made sufficiently apparent to those who, on account of their mutual distrust, now presented themselves with less ceremony than usual, at the threshold of the hut. The light within came from a fagot which was burning on the rude hearth, but it was quite strong enough to show the monk and his companions that the anchorite was not alone. Their footsteps had evidently been heard, and a female had time to arise from her knees, and to arrange her mantle in such a manner as effectually to conceal her countenance. The hurried action was scarcely completed when the Benedictine darkened the door with his gloomy robes, while Berchthold and his friend stood gazing over his shoulders, with lively curiosity mingled with surprise.

The form and countenance of the anchorite were those of middle age. His eye had lost nothing of its quickness or intelligence, though his movements had the deliberation and care that long experience insensibly interweaves in the habits of those who have not lived in vain. He expressed neither concern nor wonder at the unexpected visits, but regarding his guests earnestly, like one who assured himself of their identity, he mildly motioned for all to enter. There was jealous suspicion in the glance of the Benedictine, as he complied; for until now, he had no reason to believe that the recluse was usurping so intimate and so extensive an influence over the minds of the young, as the presence of the unknown female would give reason to believe.

"I knew that thou wert of holy life and constant prayer, venerable hermit," he said, in a tone that questioned in more than one meaning of the term, "but until this moment, I had not thought thee vested with the Church's power to hearken to the transgressions of the faithful and to forgive sins!"

"The latter is an office, brother, that of right belongs only to God. The head of the Church himself is but an humble instrument of faith, in discharging this solemn trust."

The countenance of the monk did not become more amicable at this reply, nor did he fail to cast a scrutinizing glance at the muffled form of the stranger, in a fruitless endeavor to recognize her person.

"Thou hast not even the tonsure," he continued, while his uneasy eye rolled from that of the recluse to the form of the stranger, who had shrunk, as far as the narrow place would permit, from observation.

"Thou seest, father, that I have all the hair that time and infirmities have left me. But is it thought, in thy beneficed and warlike abbey, that the advice of one who has lived long enough to know and to lament his own errors, can injure the less experienced? If unhappily I may have deceived myself, thou art timely present, reverend monk, to repair the wrong."

"Let the maiden come to the confessional of the Abbey Church, if distrust or apprehension weigh upon her mind; doubt it not, she will find great comfort in the experiment."

"As I will testify, from many trials—" abruptly interposed the cow-herd, who advanced intrusively between the two devotees, in a manner to occupy all their attention. "'Go upon the hill, and ease thy soul, Gottlob,' is my good and venerable mother in the practice of saying, whenever my opinion of myself is getting to be too humble, 'and discourse with some of the godly fathers of the Abbey, whose wisdom and unction will not fail to lighten thy heart of even a heavier load. There is Father Ulrich, he is a paragon of virtue and self-denial; and Father Cuno is even more edifying and salutary than he; while Father Siegfried is more balmy to a soul, than the most reverend Abbot, the virtuous and pious Father Bonifacius himself! Whatever thou doest, child, go upon the hill, and enter boldly into the church, like a

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loaded and oppressed sinner as thou art, and especially seek counsel and prayer from the excellent and beloved Father Siegfried.'"

"And thou—who art thou?" demanded the half-doubting monk, "that thou speakest of me in terms that I so little merit, to my face?"

"I would I were Lord Emich of Hartenburg, or for that matter, the Elector Palatine himself, in order to do justice to those I honor; in which case certain Fathers of Limburg should have especial favor, and that quickly too, after my own flesh and blood! Who am I, father? I wonder that a face so often seen at the confessional should be forgotten. What there is of me to boast of, Father Siegfried, is of thine own forming—but it is no cause of surprise that thou dost not recall me to mind, since the meek and lowly of spirit are sure to forget their own good works!"

"Thou callest thyself Gottlob—but the name belongs to many Christians."

"More bear it, reverend monk, than know how to do it honor. There is Gottlob Frincke, as arrant a knave as any in Duerckheim; and Gottlob Popp might have more respect for his baptismal vow; and as to Lord Gottlob of Manheim——"

"We will overlook the transgressions of the remainder of thy namesakes, for the good that thou thyself hast done," interrupted the Benedictine, who, having insensibly yielded to the unction of flattery in the commencement of the interview, began now to be ashamed of the weakness, as the fluent cow-herd poured forth his words in a manner to excite some suspicion of the quality of praise that came from such a source. "Come to me when thou wilt, son, and such counsel as a weak head, but a sincere heart, can render, shall not be withheld."

"How this would lighten the heart of my old mother to hear! 'Gottlob,' would she say——"

"What has become of thy companion, and off the maiden?" hastily demanded the Benedictine.

As the part of the cow-herd was successfully performed, he stood aside, with an air of well-acted simplicity and amazement, leaving the discourse to be pursued between the recluse and the monk.

"Thy guests have suddenly left us," continued the latter, after satisfying himself, by actual observation, that no one remained in the hut but himself, its regular occupant, and the honey-tongued Gottlob; "and, as it would seem, in company!"

"They are gone as they came, voluntarily and without question."

"Thou knowest them, by frequent visits, holy hermit?"

"Father, I question none: were the Elector Friedrich to come into my abode, he would be welcome, and this cow-herd is not less so. To both, at parting, I merely say, 'God speed ye!'"

"Thou keepest the cattle of the burghers, Gottlob?"

"I keep a herd, reverend priest, such as my masters please to trust to my care."

"We have great cause of complaint against one of thy fellows who serves the Count of Hartenburg, and who is in the daily habit of trespassing on the pastures of the church. Dost know the hind?"

"Potztausend! If all the knaves who do these wrongs, when out of sight of their masters, were set in a row before the eyes of the most reverend Abbot of Limburg, he would scarce know whether to begin with prayers or stripes, and they say he is a potent priest at need, with both! I sometimes tremble for my own conduct, though no one can have a better opinion of himself than I, poor and lowly as I stand in your reverend presence; for a hard fortune, and some oversight in the management of my father's affairs, have brought me to the need of living among such associates. Were I not of approved honesty, there might be more beasts on the Abbey lands; and they who now pass their time in fasting in sheer humility, might come to the practice of sheer necessity."

The Benedictine examined the meek countenance of Gottlob with a keen distrustful eye; he next invited the hermit to bestow his blessing, and then motioning for the hind to retire, he entered on the real object of his visit to the hermitage.

We shall merely say, at this point of the narrative, that the moment was extremely critical to all who dwelt in the Palatinate of the Rhine. The Elector had, perhaps imprudently for a prince of his limited resources,

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taken an active part in the vindictive warfare then raging, and serious reverses threatened to endanger not only his tranquillity but his throne. It was a consequence of the feudal system, which then so generally prevailed in Europe, that internal disorders succeeded any manifest, though it might be only a temporary derangement of the power of the potentate that held the right of sovereignty over the infinite number of petty rulers who, at that period, weighed particularly heavy on Germany. To them he was the law, for they were not apt to acknowledge any supremacy that did not come supported by the strong hand. The ascending scale of rulers, including baron, count, landgrave, margrave, duke, elector, and king, up to the nominal head of the state, the Emperor himself, with the complicated and varied interests, embracing allegiance within allegiance, and duty upon duty, was likely in itself to lead to dissension, had the Imperial Crown been one of far more defined and positive influence than it was. But, uncertain and indirect in the application of its means, it was rare that any very serious obstacle to tranquillity was removed without the employment of positive force. No sooner was the Emperor involved in a serious struggle, than the great princes endeavored to recover that balance which had been lost by the long ascendency of a particular family, while the minor princes seldom saw themselves surrounded with external embarrassment, that internal discord did not come to increase the evil. As a vassal was commonly but a rude reflection of his lord's enmities and prejudices, the reader will have inferred from the language of the cow-herd, that affairs were not on the most amicable footing between those near neighbors, the Abbot of Limburg and the Count of Hartenburg. The circumstance of their existing so near each other was, of itself, almost a certain cause of rivalry; to which natural motive of contention may be added the unremitted strife between the influence of superstition and the dread of the sword.

The visit of the monk had reference to certain interests connected with the actual state of things, as they existed between the Abbey and the Castle. As it would be premature, however, to expose his object, we shall be content with saying, that the conference between the priest and the hermit lasted for half an hour, when the former took his leave, craving a blessing from one of a life so pure and self-denying as his host.

At the door of the hut the monk found Gottlob, who had early been gotten rid of, it will be remembered, but, who for reasons of his own, had seen fit to await the termination of the conference.

"Thou here, son!" exclaimed the Benedictine. "I had thought thee at peace in thy bed, favored with the benediction of a hermit so holy!"

"Good fortune is sure to drive sleep from my eyes, father," returned Gottlob, dropping in by the side of the monk, who was walking through the cedars toward the ancient gateway of the camp. "I am not of your animal kind, that is no sooner filled with a good thing than it lies down to rest; but the happier I become, the more I desire to be up to enjoy it."

"Thy wish is natural, and, although many natural desires are to be resisted, I do not see the danger of our knowing our own happiness."

"Of the danger I will say nothing, father, but of the comfort, there is not a youth in Duerckheim, who can speak with greater certainty than myself."

"Gottlob," said the Benedictine, insensibly edging nearer his companion, like one willing to communicate confidentially, "since thou namest Duerckheim, canst say aught of the humor of its people, in this matter of contention between our holy Abbot and Lord Emich of Hartenburg?"

"Were I to tell thy reverence the truth that lies deepest in my mind, it would be to say that the burghers wish to see the affair brought to an end, in such a way as to leave no doubt, hereafter, to which party they most owe obedience and love, since they find it a little hard upon their zeal, to have so large demands of these services made by both parties."

"Thou canst not serve God and Mammon, son, so sayeth one who could not deceive."

"And so sayeth reason, too, worshipful monk, but to give thee at once my inmost soul, I believe there is not a man in our Duerckheim, who believes himself strong enough in learning to say, in this strife of

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duties, which is God and which is Mammon!"

"How! do they call in question our sacred mission—our divine embassy—in short, our being what we are?"

"No man is so bold as to say that the monks of Limburg are what they are; that might be irreverent to the Church, and indecent to Father Siegfried; and the most we dare to say is, that they seem to be what they are; and that is no small matter, considering the way things go in this world. 'Seem to be, Gottlob,' said my poor father, 'and thou wilt escape envy and enemies; for in this seemliness there is nothing so alarming to others; it is only when one is really the thing itself, that men begin to find fault. If thou wishest to live peaceably with thy neighbors, push nothing beyond seeming to be, for that much all will bear, since all can seem; whereas being oftentimes sets a whole village in an uproar. It is wonderful the virtue there is in seeming, and the heart-burnings and scandal, ay, and the downright quarrels there are in being just what one seems.' No, the most we say, in Duerckheim, is that the monks of Limburg seem to be men of God."

"And Lord Emich?"

"As to Count Emich, father, we hold it wise to remember he is a great noble. The Elector has not a bolder knight, nor the Emperor a truer vassal; we say, therefore, that he seems to be brave and loyal."

"Thou makest great account, son, of these apparent qualities."

"Knowing the frailty of man, father, and the great likelihood of error, when we wish to judge of acts and reasons, that lie deeper than our knowledge, we hold it to be the most prudent. No, let us of Duerckheim alone, as men of caution!"

"For a cow-herd, thou wantest not wit—Canst read?"

"By God's favor, Providence put that little accident in my way when a child, reverend monk, and I picked it up, as I might swallow a sweet morsel."

"'Tis a gift more likely to injure than to serve one of thy calling. The art can do little benefit to thy herd!"

"I will not take upon myself to say, that any of the cattle are much the better for it; though, to deal fairly by thee, reverend Benedictine, there are animals among them that seem to be."

"How! wilt thou attempt to show a fact not only improbable but impossible? Go to, thou hast fallen upon some silly work of a jester. There have been numberless of these commissions of the devil poured forth, since the discovery of that imprudent brother of Mainz. I would gladly hear in what manner a beast can profit by the art of printing!"

Thy patience, Father Siegfried, and thou shalt know. Now here is a hind that can read, and there is one that cannot. We will suppose them both the servants of Emich of Hartenburg. Well, they go forth of a morning with their herds; this taking the path to the hills of the Count, and that, having read the description of the boundaries between his Lord's land and that of the holy Abbot of Limburg, taking another, because learning will not willingly follow ignorance; whereupon the reader reaches a nearer and better pasture than he who hath gone about to feed upon ground that has only been trodden upon too often before, by hoof of beast and foot of man."

"Thy learning hath not done much towards clearing thy head, Gottlob, whatever it may have done for the condition of thy herd!"

"If your worship has any doubts of my being what I say, here is proof of its justice, then—I know nothing that so crams a man and confuses him as learning! He who has but one horn can take it and go his way; whereas he that hath many, may lose his herd while choosing between instruments that are better or worse. He that hath but one sword, will draw it and slay his enemy; but he that hath much armor, may lose his life while putting on his buckler or head-piece."

"I had not thought thee so skilful in answers. And thou thinkest the good people of Duerckheim will stand neuter between the Abbey and the Count?"

"Father, if thou wilt show me by which side they will be the greatest gainers, I think I might venture to say, with some certainty, on which side they will be likely to draw the sword. Our burghers are prudent townsmen, as I have said, and it is not often that they

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are found fighting against their own interests."

"Thou shouldst know, son, that he who is most favored in this life, may find the balances of justice weighing against him in the next; while he who suffers in the flesh, will be most likely to find its advantage in the spirit."

"Himmel! In that case, reverend Benedictine, the most holy Abbot of Limburg himself may fare worse hereafter than even a hind who now lives like a dog!" exclaimed Gottlob, with an air of admiration and simplicity that completely misled his listener. "The one is said to comfort the body in various ways, and to know the difference between a cup of pure Rhenish and a draught of the washy liquors that come from the other side of our mountains; while the other, whether it be of necessity or inclination I will not take upon myself to say, drinks only of the spring. 'Tis a million of pities that one never knoweth which to choose, present ease with future pain, or a starving body with a happy soul! Believe me, Father Siegfried, were thy reverence to think more of these trials that befall us ignorant youths, thou wouldst not deal so heavily with the penances, as thine own severe virtue often tempts thee to do."

"What is thus done is done for thy health, future and present. By chastening the spirit in this manner, it is gradually prepared for its final purification, and thou art not a loser in the eyes of thy fellows, by leading a chaste life. Thou wilt have justice at the settlement of the great account."

"Nay, I am no greedy creditor, to dun Providence for my dues. I very well know that what will come cannot be prevented, and therefore I take patience to be a virtue. But I hope these accounts, of which you tell us often, are kept with sufficient respect for a poor man; for, to deal fairly with thee, father, we have not overmuch favor in settling those of the world."

"Thou hast credit for all thy good deeds with thy fellows, Gottlob."

"I wish it were true! To me it seems that the world is ready enough to charge, while it is as niggardly as a miser in giving credit—I never did an evil act—and as we are all mortal and frail, most holy monk, these accidents will befall even your saint or a Benedictine—that the deed itself and all its consequences were not set down against me, in letters that a short-sighted man might read; while most of my merits—and considering I am but a cow-herd they are of respectable quality—seem to be forgotten. Now your Abbot, or his Highness the Elector, or even Count Emich——"

"The Summer Landgrave!" interrupted the monk, laughing.

"Summer or winter, as thou wilt, Father Siegfried, he is Count of Hartenburg, and a noble of Leiningen. Even he does no deed of charity, or even of simple justice, that all men do not seize upon the occasion to proclaim it, as eagerly as they endeavor to upbraid me for the accidental loss of a beast, or any other little backsliding, that may befall one, who being bold under thy holy instruction, sometimes stumbles against a sin."

"Thou art a casuist, and, at another time, I must look more closely into the temper of thy mind. At present, thou mayst purchase favor of the Church by enlisting a little more closely in her interests. I remember thy cleverness and thy wit, Gottlob, for both have been remarked in thy visits to the convent; but, until this moment, there has not been sufficient reason to use the latter in the manner that we may fairly claim to do, considering our frequent prayers, and the other consolations afforded in thy behalf."

"Do not be too particular, Father Siegfried, for thy words reveal grievous penance!"

"Which may be much mitigated in future, if not entirely avoided, by a service that I would now propose to thee, honest Gottlob, and which I will venture to say, from my knowledge of thy reverence for holy things, as is manifest in thy attentions to the pious hermit, and thy love for the Abbey of Limburg, thou wouldst not refuse to undertake."

"So!"

"Nay, I have as good as pledged myself to Father Bonifacius to procure either thee, or one shrewd and faithful as thee, to do a trusty service for the brotherhood."

"The latter might not be easy among the cow-herds!"

"Of that I am sure. Thy skill in the management of the beasts may yet gain thee the office of tending the ample herds of the

Abbey. Thou art already believed fit for the charge."

"Not to deny my own merits, sagacious father, I have already some knowledge of the pastures."

"And of the beasts, too, Gottlob; we keep good note of the characters of all who come to our confessionals. There are worse than thine among them, I do assure thee."

"And yet have I never told thee half that I might say of myself, father!"

"It is not important now. Thou knowest the state of the contest between Count Emich and our Abbey. The service that I ask of thee, son, is this; and by discharging it, with thy wonted readiness, believe me thou wilt gain favor with St. Benedict and his children. We have had reason to know, that there is a strong band of armed men in the castle, ready and anxious to assail our walls, under a vain belief that they contain riches and stores to repay the sacrilege; but we want precise knowledge of their numbers and intentions. Were we to send one of known pursuits on this errand, the Count would find means to mislead him; whereas, we think a hind of thy intelligence might purchase the Church's kindness without suspicion."

"Were Count Emich to get wind of the matter, he would not leave me an ear with which to listen to thy holy admonitions."

"Keep thine own counsel, and he will not suspect one of thy appearance. Hast no pretext for visiting the castle?"

"Nay, it would be easy to make a thousand. Here, I might say, I wished to ask the cow-herd of Lord Emich for his cunning in curing diseased hoofs, or I might pretend a wish to change my service, or, there is no want of laughing damsels in and about the hold."

"Enough: thou art he, Gottlob, for whom I have sought daily for a fortnight. Go thy way, then, without fail, and seek me after to-morrow's mass, in the Abbey."

"It may be enough on the side of Heaven, father, but men of our prudence must not forget their mortal state. Am I to risk my ears, do discredit to my simplicity, and neglect my herd, without a motive?"

"Thou wilt serve the Church, son; get favor in the eyes of our reverend Abbot, and thy courage and dexterity will be remembered in future indulgences."

"That I shall serve the Church it is well known to me, reverend Benedictine, and it is a privilege of which a cow-herd hath reason to be proud; but, by serving the Church, I shall make enemies on earth, for two sufficient reasons: first, that the Church is in no great esteem in this valley; and second, because men never love a friend for being any better than themselves. 'No, Gottlob,' used my excellent father to say, 'seem to all around thee conscious of thy unworthiness, after which thou mayst be what thou seemest. On this condition only can virtue live at peace with its fellow-creatures. But if thou wouldst have the respect of mankind,' would he say, 'set a fair price on all thou doest, for the world will not give thee credit for disinterestedness; and if thou workest for naught, it will think thou deservest naught. No,' did he shake his head and add, 'that which cometh easy is little valued, while that which is costly, do men set a price upon.'"

"Thy father was, like thyself, one that looked to his ease. Thou knowest that we inhabitants of cells do not carry silver."

"Nay, righteous Benedictine, if it were a trifle of gold, I am not one to break a bargain for so small a difference."

"Thou shalt have gold, then. On the faith of my holy calling, I will give thee an image of the Emperor in gold, shouldst thou succeed in bringing the tidings we require."

Gottlob stopped short, and kneeling, he reverently asked the monk to bless him. The latter complied, half doubting the discretion of employing such an emissary, between whose cunning and simplicity he was completely at fault. Still, as he risked nothing, except in the nature of the information he was to receive, he saw no sufficient reason for recalling the commission he had just bestowed. He gave the desired benediction, therefore; and our two conspirators descended the mountain in company, discoursing, as they went, of the business on which the cow-herd was about to proceed. When so near the road as to be in danger of observation, they separated, each taking the direction necessary to his object.

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CHAPTER IV.

"And not a matron, sitting at her wheel,
But could repeat their story."—ROGERS.

THE female, enveloped in her mantle, had so well profited by the timely interposition of Gottlob Frincke, as to quit the hermit's hut without attracting the notice of the Benedictine. But the vigilance of young Berchthold had not been so easily eluded. He stepped aside as she glided through the door, then stooping merely to catch the eye of the cow-herd, to whom he communicated his intention by a sign, he followed. Had the forester felt any doubts as to the identity of her he pursued, the light and active movement would have convinced him that age, at least, had no agency in inducing her to conceal her features. The roe-buck of his own forests scarce bounded with more agility than the fugitive fled, on first quitting the abode of the recluse; nor did her speed sensibly lessen, until she had crossed most of the melancholy camp, and reached a spot where the opening of the blue and star-lit void showed that she was at the verge of the wood, and near the margin of the summit of the mountain. Here she paused, and stood leaning against a cedar, like one whose strength was exhausted.

Berchthold had followed swiftly, but without losing that appearance of calmness and of superior physical force which gives dignity to the steps of young manhood, as compared with the timid but more attractive movements of the feebler sex. He seemed conscious of his greater powers, and unwilling to increase a flight that was already swifter than circumstances required, and which he knew to be far more owing to a vague and instinctive alarm than to any real cause for apprehension. When the speed of the female ceased, his own relaxed, and he approached the spot where she stood panting for breath, like a cautious boy, who slackens his haste in order not to give new alarm to the bird that has just alighted.

"What is there so fearful in my face, Meta, that thou fleest my presence, as I had been the spirit of one of those Pagans that they say once peopled this camp? It is not thy wont to have this dread of a youth thou hast known from childhood, and I will say, in my own defence, known as honest and true!"

"It is not seemly in a maiden of my years it was foolish, if not disobedient, to be here at this hour," answered the hurried girl;—"I would I had not listened to the desire of hearing more of the holy hermit's wisdom!"

"Thou art not alone, Meta!"

"That were unbecoming, truly, in my father's child!" returned the young damsel, with an expression of pride of condition, as she glanced an eye toward the fallen wall, among whose stones Berchthold saw the well-known form of a female servitor of his companion's family. "Had I carried imprudence to this pass, Master Berchthold, thou wouldst have reason to believe, in sooth, that it was the daughter of some peasant, that by chance had crossed thy footstep."

"There is little danger of that error," answered Berchthold quickly. "I know thee well; thou art Meta, the only child of Heinrich Frey, the Burgomaster of Duerckheim. None know thy quality and hopes better than I, for none have heard them oftener!"

The damsel dropped her head in a movement of natural regret and sudden repentance, and when her blue eye, softened by a ray of the moon, met the gaze of the forester, he saw that better feelings were uppermost.

"I did not wish to recount my father's honors nor any accidental advantage of my situation, and, least of all, to thee," answered the maiden, with eagerness; "but I felt concern lest thou shouldst imagine I had forgotten the modesty of my sex and condition—or, I had fear that thou mightest—thy manner is much changed of late, Berchthold!"

"It is then without my knowledge or intention. But we will forget the past, and thou wilt tell me, what wonder hath brought thee to this suspected and dreaded moor, at an hour so unusual?"

Meta smiled, and the expression of her countenance proved, that if she had moments of uncharitable weakness, they were more the offspring of the world's opinions, than of her own frank and generous nature.

"I might retort the question on thee, Berchthold, and plead a woman's curiosity as a reason why I should be quickly answered—Why art thou here, at an hour when most young hunters sleep?"

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"I am Lord Emich's forester; but thou, as there has just been question, art a daughter of the Burgomaster of Duerckheim."

"I give thee credit for all the difference. Did my mother know that I was thus about to furnish a reason for my conduct, she would say, 'Keep thy explanations, Meta, for those who have a right to demand them!'"

"And Heinrich Frey?"

"He would be little likely to approve of either visit or explanation."

"He does not so much disapprove of thee, Master Berchtold, as that thou art only Lord Emich's forester. Wert thou as thine own parent was, a substantial burgher of our town, he might esteem thee much. But thou hast great favor with my dear mother!"

"Heaven bless her, that in her own prosperity she hath not forgotten those who have fallen! I think that, in thy heart as in thy looks, Meta, thou more resemblest thy mother than thy father."

"I would have it so. When I speak to thee of my being the child of Heinrich Frey, it is without thought of any present difference between us, I do affirm to thee, Berchthold, but rather as showing that in not forgetting my station, I am not likely to do it discredit. Nay, I know not that a forester's is a dishonorable office! They who serve the Elector in this manner are noble."

"And they who serve nobles, simple. I am but a menial, Meta, though it be in a way to do little mortification to my pride."

"And what is Count Emich but a vassal of the Elector, who, in turn, is a subject of the Emperor! Thou shalt not dishonor thyself in this manner, Berchthold, and no one say aught to vindicate thee."

"Thanks, dearest Meta. Thou art the child of my mother's oldest and closest friend, and whatever the world may proclaim of the difference that now exists between us, thy excellent heart whispers to the contrary. Thou art not only the fairest, but, in truth, the kindest and gentlest damsel of thy town!"

The daughter, only child, and consequently the heiress of the wealthiest burgher of Duerckheim, did not hear this opinion of Lord Emich's handsome forester without secret gratification.

"And now thou shalt know the reason of this unusual visit," said Meta, when the silent pleasure excited by the last speech of young Berchthold had a little subsided; "for this have I, in some measure, promised to thee; and it would little justify thy good opinion to forget a pledge. Thou knowest the holy hermit, and the sudden manner of his appearance in the Heidenmauer?"

"None are ignorant of the latter, and thou hast already seen that I visit him in his hut."

"I shall not pretend to give, or to seek, the reason, but sure it is, that he had not been a week in the old Roman abode, when he sought occasion to show me greater notice than to any other maiden of Duerckheim, or than any merit of mine might claim."

"How! is the knave but a pretender to this sanctity, after all?"

"Thou canst not be jealous of a man of his years; and, judging by his worn countenance and hollow eyes, years too of mortification and suffering! He truly is of a character to give a youth of thy age, and gentle air, and active frame, and comely appearance, uneasiness! But I see the color in thy cheek, Master Berchthold, and will not offend thee with comparisons that are so much to thy disadvantage. Be the motive of the holy hermit what it will, on the two occasions when he visited our town, and in the visits that we maidens have often made to his cell, he hath shown kind interest in my welfare and future hopes, both as they are connected with this life, and with that to which we all hasten, although it be with steps that are not heard even by our own ears."

"It does not surprise me, that all who see and know thee, Meta, should act thus. And yet I find it very strange!"

"Nay," said the amused girl, "now thou justifiest the exact words of old Ilse, who hath often said to me, 'Take heed, Meta, and put not thy faith too easily in the language of the young townsmen; for, by looking closely into their meaning, thou wilt see that they contradict themselves. Youth is so eager to obtain its end, that it stops not to separate the true from the plausible.' These are her very words, and oft repeated too, which thou hast just verified—I believe the crone fairly sleepeth on that pile of the fallen wall!"

"Disturb her not. One of her years hath

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great need of rest ; nay, it would be thoughtless to rob her of this little pleasure !"

Meta had made a step in advance, seemingly with intent to arouse her attendant, when the hurried words and rapid action of the youth caused her to hesitate. Receding to her former attitude, beneath the shadow of the cedar, she more considerately resumed—

"It would be ungracious, in sooth, to awaken one who hath so lately toiled up this weary hill."

"And she so aged, Meta !"

"And one that did so much for my infancy ! I ought to go back to my father's house, but my kind mother will overlook the delay, for she loveth Ilse little less than one of her own blood."

"Thy mother knoweth of this visit to the hermit's hut, then ?"

"Dost think, Master Berchthold, that a Burgomaster of Duerckheim's only child would go forth, at this hour, without permission had? There would be great unseemliness in such secret gossiping, and a levity that would better suit thy damsels of Count Emich's village; they say indeed, in our town, that the castle damsels are none too nice in their manner of life."

"They belie us of the mountain strangely, in the towns of the plain ! I swear to thee, there is not greater modesty in thy Duerckheim palace than among our females, whether of the village or of the castle."

"It may be true in the main, and, for the credit of my sex, I hope it is so; but thou wilt scarce find courage, Berchthold, to say aught in favor of her they call Gisela, the warder's child ? More vanity have I never seen in female form ! "

"They think her fair, in Hartenburg."

"'Tis that opinion which spoileth the creature's manner! Thou art much in her society, Master Berchthold, and I doubt not that use causeth thee to overlook some qualities that are not concealed from strangers. 'Do but regard that flaunting bird from the pass of the Jaegerthal,' said the excellent old Ilse, one morn that we had a festival in our venerable church, to which the country round came forth in their best array ; 'one would imagine from its fluttering, and the movements of its feathers, that it fancied the eye of every young hunter was on its plumage, and that it dreaded the bolt of the archer unexpectedly! And yet have I known animals of this breed that did not so greatly fear the fowler's hand, if truth were said !'"

"Thou judgest Gisela harshly ; for though of some lightness of speech, and haply not without admiration of her own beauty, the girl is far from being uncompanionable, or, at times, of agreeable discourse."

"Nay, I do but repeat the words of Ilse, Master Berchthold !"

"Thy Ilse is old, and garrulous, and is like to utter foolishness."

"This may be so—but let it be foolish, if thou wilt—the folly of my nurse is my folly. I have gained so much from her discourse, that I fear it is now too late to amend. To deal fairly with thee, she did not utter a syllable concerning thy warder's daughter that I do not believe."

Berchthold was but little practised in the ways of the human heart. Free in the expression of his own sentiments as the air he breathed on his native hills, and entirely without thought of guilt, as respects the feeling which bound him to Meta, he had never descended into the arcana of that passion of which he was so completely the subject, without indeed knowing even the extent of his own bondage. He viewed this little ebullition of jealousy, therefore, as a generous nature regards all injustice, and he entered only the more warmly into the defence of the injured party. One of those sieve-like hearts that have been perforated a hundred times by the shots that Cupid fires, right and left, in a capital, would probably have had recourse to the same expedient, merely to observe to what extent he could trifle with the feelings of a being he professed to love. Europeans, who are little addicted to looking into the eye of their cis-Atlantic kinsman in search of the mote, say, that the master passion of life is but a sluggish emotion in the American bosom. That those who are chiefly employed in the affairs of this world should be content with the natural course of the affections, as they arise in the honest relations of the domestic circle, is quite as probable, as it is true that they who feed their passions by vanity and variety, are mistaken when they think that casual and fickle sensations compose any of the true ingredients

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of that purifying and elevated sentiment, which, by investing the admired object with all that is estimable, leaves us to endeavor to be worthy of the homage we insensibly pay to virtue. In Berchthold and Meta, the reader is to look for none of that constitutional fervor, which sometimes substitutes impulse for a deeper feeling, or for any of that factitious cultivation of the theory of love, that so often tempts the neophyte to mistake his own hallucinations for the more natural attachment of sympathy and reason. For the former they lived too far north, and for the latter it might possibly be said, that fortune had cast their lot a little too far south. That subtle and nearly indefinable sympathy between the sexes, which we call love, to which all are subject, since its principle is in nature itself, exists perhaps in its purest and least conventional form precisely in the bosoms of those whom Providence has placed in the middle state, between extreme cultivation and ignorance; between the fastidious and sickly perversion of over indulgence, and the selfishness that is the fruit of constant appeals to exertion; or the very condition of the two young persons that have been placed before the reader in this chapter. Enough has been seen to show that Berchthold, though exercising a menial office, had received opinions superior to his situation; a circumstance that is sufficiently explained by the allusions already made to the decayed fortunes of his parents. His language and manner, therefore, as he generously vindicated Gisela, the daughter of the person charged to watch the approaches of Lord Emich's castle, was perhaps superior to what would have been expected in a mere forester.

"I shall not take upon myself the office of pointing out the faults of our castle beauty, if faults she hath," he said; "but this much may I say in her defence, without fear of exceeding truth; her father is grown gray under the livery of Leiningen, and there is not a child in the world that showeth more reverence or affection to him who gave her being, than this same bird of thine, with its flaunting plumes, and the coquetry with the archer's bolt!"

"'Tis said, a dutiful daughter will ever make an excellent and an obedient wife."

"The luckier then will he be who weds old Friedrich's child. I have known her keep the gates, deep into the night, that her father might take his rest, when the nobles have frequented the forest later than common; aye, and to watch weary hours, when most of her years and sex would find excuses for being on their pillows. Now this have I often seen, going forth, as thou may'st be certain by my office, in Count Emich's company, in most of his hunts. Nay, Gisela is fair, none will deny; and it may be that, among her other qualities, the girl knows it."

"She appeareth not to be the only one of thy Hartenburg pile that is aware of the fact, Master Berchthold!"

"Dost thou mean, Meta, the revelling abbé, from Paris, or the sworn soldier-monk of Rhodes, that now abide in the castle?" asked the young forester, with a simplicity that would have set the heart of a coquette at ease, by its perfect nature and openness. "Now thou touchest on the matter, I will own, though one of my office should be wary of opinions on those his master loves, but I know thy prudence, Meta—Therefore will I say, that I have half suspected these two ill-assorted servants of the church, of thinking more of the poor girl than is seemly."

"Thy poor Gisela hath cause to hang herself. Truly, were wassailers, like these thou namest, to regard me with but a free look, the Burgomaster of Duerckheim should know of their boldness!"

"Meta, they would not dare! Poor Gisela is not the offspring of a stout citizen, but the warder of Hartenburg's child, and there may be some difference in thy natures, too—nay, there is; for thou art not one of those that seek the admiration of each cavalier that passeth, but a maiden that knoweth her worth, and the meed that is her due. That thou hast, in something, wronged our beauty of the hold, I needs must say; but to compare thee with her, either in the excellence of the body or that of the mind, is what could never be done justly. If she is fair, thou art fairer; if she is witty, thou art wise!"

"Nay, do not mistake me, Berchtold, by thinking that I have uttered aught against thy warder's daughter that is harsh and unseemly. I know the girl's cleverness, and

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moreover I am willing to acknowledge, that one cruelly placed by fortune in a condition of servitude, like her's, may find it no easy matter to be always what one of her sex and years could wish. I dare to say, that Gisela, did fortune and opportunity permit, would do no discredit to her breeding and looks, both of which, sooth to say, are somewhat above her condition."

"And thou saidst, thy mother knew of this visit to the hermit?"

"And said truth. My mother has never made objection to any reverence paid by her daughter to the Church or to its servants."

"That hath she not!—Thou art amongst the most frequent of those who resort to the Abbey in quest of holy offices thyself, Meta!"

"Am I not a Christian? Wouldst have a well-respected maiden forget her duties?"

"I say not that; but there is discourse amongst us hunters, that of late the prior hath much preferred his young nephew, Brother Hugo, to the duty of quieting the consciences of the penitents. It were better that some father, whose tonsure hath a ring of gray, were put into the confessional, in a church so much frequented by the young and fair of Duerckheim."

"Thou wouldst do well to write of this to the Bishop of Worms, or to our holy Abbot, in thine own scholarly hand. Thou hast the clerkly gifts, Master Berchthold, and might persuade!"

"I would that the little I have done in this way had not so failed of its design. Thou hast had frequent proofs of its sincerity, if not of its skill, Meta."

"Well this is idle, and leads me to forget the hermit. My mother—I know not why—and now thou makest me think of it, I find it different from her common rule; but it is certain that she in nowise discourages these visits to the Heidenmauer. We are very young, Berchthold, and may not yet understand all that enters into older and wiser heads!"

"It is strange that the holy man should seek just us! If he most urges his advice on you among the damsels of the town, he most gives his counsel to me among the youths of the Jaegerthal!"

There was a charm in this idea which held these two young and unpractised minds in sweet thraldom for many fleeting minutes. They conversed of the unexplained sympathy between the man of God and themselves, long and with undiminishing interest in the subject, for it seemed to both that it contained a tie to unite them still closer to each other. Whatever philosophy and experience may pretend on such subjects, it is certain that man is disposed to be superstitious in respect to the secret influences that guide his fortunes, in the dark passage of the world. Whether it be the mystery of the unforeseen future, or the consciousness of how much of even his most prized success is the result of circumstances that he never could or did control, or whether God, with a view to his own harmonious and sublime ends, has implanted this principle in the human breast, in order to teach us dependence on a superior power, it is certain that few reach a state of mind so calculating and reasoning as not to trust some portion of that which is to come, to the chances of Fortune, or to Providence; for so we term the directing power, as the mind clings to or rejects the immediate agency of the Deity, in the conduct of the subordinate concerns of life. In the age of which we write, intelligence had not made sufficient progress to elevate ordinary minds above the arts of necromancy. Men no longer openly consulted the entrails of brutes, in order to learn the will of fate, but they often submitted to a dictation scarcely less beastly, and few indeed were they who were able to separate piety from superstition, or the grand dispensations of Providence from the insignificant interests of selfishness. It is not surprising, therefore, that Berchthold and Meta should cling to the singular interest that the hermit manifested in them respectively, as an omen propitious to their common hopes; common, for though the maiden had not so far relinquished the reserve she still deemed essential to her sex, as to acknowledge all she felt, that subtle instinct which unites the young and innocent left little doubt in the mind of either, of the actual state of the other's inclinations.

Old Ilse had consequently ample time to rest her frame, after the painful toil of the ascent between the town and the camp. When Meta at length approached to arouse her, the garrulous woman broke out in exclamations of surprise at the shortness of the

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interview with the hermit, for the soundness of her slumbers left her in utter ignorance of the appearance and disappearance of Berchthold.

"It is but a moment, Meta, dear," she said, "since we came up the hill, and I fear thou hast not given sufficient heed to the wise words of the holy man. We should not reject a wholesome draught because it proves bitter to the mouth, child, but swallow all to the last drop, when we think there is healing in the cup. Didst deal fairly by the hermit, and tell him honestly of thy evil nature?"

"Thou forgettest, Ilse, the hermit has not even the tonsure, and cannot shrive and pardon."

"Nay, nay—I know not that! A hermit is a man of God; and a man of God is holy; and any Christian may, aye, and should pardon; and as to shriving, give me a self-denying recluse, who passes his time in prayer, mortifying soul and body, before any monk of Limburg, say I! There is more virtue in one blessing from such a man, than in a dozen from a carousing Abbot—I know not but I might say fifty."

"But I had his blessing, nurse."

"Well, that is comforting, and we have not wearied our limbs for naught; but thou shouldst have told him of thy wish to wear the laced bodice, at the last mass, in order that thy equals might envy thy beauty. It would have been wholesome to have acknowledged that sin, at least."

"But he questioned me not of my sins. All his discourse was of my father's house, and of my good mother, and—and of other matters."

"Thou shouldst then have edged the bodice in among the other matters. Have I not always forewarned thee, Meta, of the danger of pride, and of stirring envy in the bosom of a companion? There is naught more uncomfortable than envy, as I know by experience. Oh! I am no longer young; and come to me if thou wouldst wish to know what envy is, or any other dangerous vice, and I warrant thee thou shalt hear it well explained! Aye, thou wert very wrong not to have spoken of the bodice!"

"Had it been fit to confess, I might have found more serious sins to own than any that belong to dress."

"I know not that! Dress is a great beguiler of the young heart, and of the handsome face. If thou hast beauty in thy house, break thy mirrors that the young should not know it, is what I have heard a thousand times; and as thou art both young and fair, I will repeat it, though all Duerckheim gainsay my words, thou art in danger if thou knowest it. No, hadst thou told the hermit of that bodice, it might have done much good. What matters it to such a man, whether he hath the tonsure or not? He hath prayers, and fastings, and midnight thought, and great bodily suffering, and these are surely worth as much hair as hath ever fallen from all the monks in the Palatinate. I would that thou hadst told him of that bodice, child!"

"Since thou so wishest it, at our next meeting it shall be said, dear Ilse; so set thy heart at peace."

"This will give thy dear mother great pleasure; else, why should she consent that a daughter of her's should visit a heathenish camp at so late an hour? I warrant thee that she thought of the bodice!"

"Do cease speaking of the garment, nurse; my thoughts are bent on something else."

"Well, if indeed thou thinkest of something else, it may be amiss to say more at present, though, Heaven it knows! thou hast great occasion to recall that vain-glorious mass to thy mind. How suddenly thy communion with the hermit ended to-night, Meta!"

"We have not been long on the mountain, truly, Ilse. But we must hasten back, lest my mother should be uneasy."

"And why should she be so? Am I not with thee? Is age nothing, and experience, and prudence, and an old head, aye, and, for that matter, an old body, too, and a good memory, and such eyes as no other in Duerckheim of my years hath—I say of my years, for thou hast better; and thy dear mother's are little worse than thine—but of my years few have their equal. At thy age, girl, I was not the old Ilse, but the lively Ilse, and the active, and, God forgive me if there be vain-glory in the words! but truth should always be spoken—the handsome Ilse, and this too without aid from any such bodice as that of thine."

"Wilt never forget the bodice! here, lean

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on me, nurse, or thy foot may fail thee in the steep descent."

Here they began to descend, and as they were now at a point of the path where much caution was necessary, the conversation in a great measure ceased.

He who visits Duerckheim now, will find sufficient remaining evidence to show that the town formerly extended more towards the base of the mountain than its present site would prove. There are the ruins of walls and towers among the vineyards that ornament the foot of the hill, and tradition speaks of fortifications that have long since disappeared, rendered useless by those improvements in warfare that have robbed so many other strong places of their importance. Then, every group of houses on an eminence was more or less a place of defence; but the use of gunpowder and artillery centuries ago rendered all these targets useless, and he who would now seek a citadel, is most sure to find it buried in some plain or morass. The world has reached another crisis in improvement, for the introduction of steam is likely to alter all its systems of offence and defence both by land and sea; but, be the future as it may, the skill of the engineer had not so far ripened at the period of our tale as to prevent Meta and her attendant from entering within walls of ancient construction, clumsily adapted to meet the exigencies of the imperfect state of the existing art. As the hour was early, they had no difficulty in reaching the Burgomaster's door without attracting remark.

CHAPTER V.

"What news?"
"None, my lord; but that the world is grown honest."
"Then is doomsday near!"—*Hamlet.*

WITHIN the whole of these widely extended states, there is scarcely a single vestige of the manner of life led by those who first settled in the wilderness. Little else is found to arrest the eye of the antiquary in the shape of a ruin, except the walls of some fortress or the mounds of an intrenchment of the war of independence. We have, it is true, some faint remains of times still more remote; and there are even a few circumvallations, or other inventions of defence, that are believed to have once been occupied by the red men; but in no part of the country did there ever exist an edifice, of either a public or a private nature, that bore any material resemblance to a feudal castle. In order, therefore, that the reader shall have as clear a picture as our feeble powers can draw, of the hold occupied by the sturdy baron who is destined to act a conspicuous part in the remainder of this legend, it has become necessary to enter at some length into a description of the surrounding localities, and of the building itself. We say of the reader, for we profess to write only for the amusement—fortunate shall we be if instruction may be added—of our own countrymen; should others be pleased to read these crude pages, we shall be flattered and of course grateful; but with this distinct avowal of our object in holding the pen, we trust they will read with the necessary amount of indulgence.

And here we shall take occasion to hold one moment's communion with that portion of the reading public of all nations, that as respects a writer, composes what is termed the world. Let it not be said of us, because we make frequent references to opinions and circumstances as they exist in our native land, that we are profoundly ignorant of the existence of all others. We make these references, crime though it be in hostile eyes, because they best answer our end in writing at all, because they allude to a state of society most familiar to our own mind, and because we believe that great use has hitherto been made of the same things, to foster ignorance and prejudice. Should we unheedingly betray the foible of national vanity—that foul and peculiar blot of American character! we solicit forgiveness; urging, in our own justification, the aptitude of a young country for falling insensibly into the vein of imitation, and praying the critical observer to overlook any blunders in this way, if perchance we should not manifest that felicity of execution which is the fruit only of great practice. Hitherto we believe that our modesty cannot justly be impeached. As yet we have left the cardinal virtues to mankind in the gross, never, to our knowledge, having written of "American courage," or "American hon-

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esty," nor yet of "American beauty," nor haply of "American manliness," nor even of "American strength of arm," as qualities abstracted and not common to our fellow-creatures; but have been content, in the unsophisticated language of this western clime, to call virtue, virtue—and vice, vice. In this we well know how much we have fallen short of numberless but nameless classical writers of our time, though we do not think we are greatly losers by the forbearance, because we have sufficient proof that when we wish to make our pages unpleasant to the foreigner, we can effect that object by much less imposing allusions to national merits; since we have good reason to believe, there exists a certain querulous class of readers who consider even the most delicate and reserved commendations of this western world as so much praise unreasonably and dishonestly abstracted from themselves. As for that knot in our own fair country who aim at success by flattering the stranger, and who hope to shine in their own little orbits by means of borrowed light, we commit them to the correction of a reproof which is certain to come, and, in their cases, to come embittered by the consciousness of its being merited by a servility as degrading as it is unnatural. As they dive deeper into the secrets of the human heart, they will learn there is a healthful feeling that cannot be repulsed with impunity, and that as none are so respected as they who fearlessly and frankly maintain their rights, so none are so contemned as those who ignobly desert them.

During the time that Berchthold was holding converse with Meta, on the mountain of the Heidenmauer, Emich of Leiningen was at rest in his castle of Hartenburg. It has already been said, that the hold was of massive masonry, the principal material being the reddish sand-stone, that is so abundantly found in nearly the whole region of the ancient Palatinate. The building had grown with time, and that which had originally been a tower had swelled into a formidable and extensive fortress. In the ages which succeeded the empire of Charlemagne, he who could rear one of these strong places, and maintain it in opposition to his neighbors, became noble, and in some measure a sovereign. He established his will as law for the contiguous territory, and they who could not enjoy their own lands, without submitting to his pleasure, were content to purchase protection by admitting their vassalage. No sooner was one of these local lords firmly established in his hold, by receiving service and homage from the husbandmen, than he began to quarrel with his nearest neighbor of his own condition. The victor necessarily grew more powerful by his conquests, until, from being the master of one castle and one village, he became in process of time the master of many. In this manner did minor barons swell into power and sovereignty, even mighty potentates tracing their genealogical and political trees into roots of this wild growth. There still stands on an abrupt and narrow ledge of land in the confederation of Switzerland and in the canton of Argovie, a tottering ruin, that, in past ages, was occupied by a knight, who from his aerie overlooked the adjoining village, and commanded the services of its handful of boors. This ruined castle was called Hapsbourg, and is celebrated as the cradle of that powerful family which has long sat upon the throne of the Cæsars, and which now rules so much of Germany and Upper Italy. The King of Prussia traces his line to the House of Hohenzollern, the offspring of another castle; and numberless are the instances in which he who thus laid the corner-stone of a strong place, in ages when security was only to be had by good walls, also laid the foundation of a long line of prosperous and puissant princes.

Neither the position of the castle of Hartenburg, however, nor the period in which it was founded, was likely to lead to results as great as these just named. As has been said, it commanded a pass important for local purposes, but not of so much moment as to give him who held the hold any material rights beyond its immediate influence. Still, as the family of Leiningen was numerous, and had other branches and other possessions in more favored portions of Germany, Count Emich was far from being a mere mountain chief. The feudal system had become methodized long before his birth, and the laws of the Empire secured to him many villages and towns on the plain, as the successor of those who had obtained them in more re-

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mote ages. He had recently claimed even a higher dignity, and wider territories, as the heir of a deceased kinsman ; but in this attempt to increase his powers, and to elevate his rank, he had been thwarted by a decision of his peers. It was to this abortive assumption of dignity that he owed the sobriquet of the Summer Landgrave; for such was the rank he had claimed, and the period for which he had been permitted to bear it.

With this knowledge of the power of their family, the reader will not be surprised to hear that the castle of the counts of Hartenburg, or, to be more accurate, of the counts of Hartenburg-Leiningen, was on a commensurate scale. Perched on the advanced spur of the mountain, just where the valley was most confined, and at a point where the little river made a short bend, the pass beneath lay quite at the mercy of the archer on its battlements. In the fore-ground, all that part of the edifice which came into the view was military, and, in some slight degree, fitted to the imperfect use that was then made of artillery; while in the rear arose that maze of courts, chapels, towers, gates, portcullises, state-rooms, offices, and family apartments, that marked the usages and tastes of the day. The hamlet which lay in the dell, immediately beneath the walls of the salient towers, or bastions, for they partook of both characters, was insignificant, and of little account in estimating the wealth and resources of the feudal lord. These came principally from Duerckheim, and the fertile plains beyond, though the forest was not without its value, in a country in which the axe had so long been used.

We have said that Emich of Leiningen was taking his rest in the hold of Hartenburg. Let the reader imagine a massive building, in the centre of the confused pile we have mentioned, rudely fashioned to meet the wants of the domestic economy of that age, and he will get a nearer view of the interior. The walls were wainscoted, and had much uncouth and massive carving; the halls were large and gloomy, loaded with armor, and at this moment pregnant with armed men ; the saloons of a medium size which suited a baronial state, and all the appliances of that mingled taste in which comfort and luxury, as now understood, were unknown, but which was not without a portion of the effect that is produced by an exhibition of heavy magnificence. With a few but signal exceptions, Germany, even at this hour, is not a country remarkable for the elegancies of domestic life. Its very palaces are of simple decoration, its luxuries of a homebred and inartificial kind, and its taste is rarely superior, and indeed not always equal, to our own. There is still a shade of the Gothic in the habits and opinions of this constant people, who seem to cultivate the subtle refinements of the mind, in preference to the more obvious and material enjoyments which address themselves to the senses.

Quaint and complicated ornaments, wrought by the patient industry of a race proverbial for this description of ingenuity; swords, daggers, morions, cuirasses, and all sorts of defensive armor then in use ; such needle-work as it befitted a noble dame to produce ; pictures that possessed most of the faults and few of the beauties of the Flemish school ; furniture that bore some such relation to the garniture of the palaces of electors and kings, as the decorations of a village drawing-room in our own time, bear to those of the large towns ; a profuse display of plate, on which the arms of Leiningen were embossed and graven in every variety of style, with genealogical trees and heraldic blazonry in colors, were the principal features.

Throughout the whole pile, there was little appearance, however, of the presence of females, or even of the means of their accommodation. Few of that sex were seen in the corridors, or offices, or courts ; though men crowded the place in unusual numbers. The latter were chiefly grim and whiskered warriors, who loitered in the halls, or in the more public parts of the castle, like idlers waiting for the expected movement of exertion. None among them were armed at all points, though this carelessly wore his morion, that had buckled on a breast-plate, and another leaned listlessly on his arquebuse or handled his pike. Here a group exercised, in levity, with their several weapons of offence ; there a jester amused a crowd of sluggish listeners, with his ribaldry and humor : and numberless were those who quaffed of the Rhenish of their lord. Although this continent had then been discovered, the goodly

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portion which has since fallen to our heritage was still in the hands of its native proprietors; and the plant, so long known as the weed of Virginia, but which has since become a staple of so many other countries in this hemisphere, was not in its present general use amongst the Germans; else would it have been our duty to finish this hasty sketch by enveloping it all in mist. Notwithstanding the general air of indifference and negligence, which reigned within the walls of Hartenburg without the gates, in the turrets, and on the advanced towers, there was the appearance of more than the customary watchfulness. Had one been there to note the circumstance, he would have seen, in addition to the sentries who always guarded the approaches of the castle, several swift-footed spies on the look-out, in the hamlet, on the rocks of the mountain-side, and along the winding paths; and as all eyes were turned towards the valley in the direction of Limburg, it was evident that the event they awaited was expecttd to arive from that quarter.

While such was the condition of his hold and of so strong a body of his vassals, Count Emich himself had retired from observation, to one of the quaint, half-rude, half-magnificent saloons of the place. The room was lighted by twenty tapers, and other well-known signs indicated the near approach of guests. He paced the large apartment with a heavy and armed heel; while care, or at least severe thought, contracted the muscles around a hard and iron brow, which bore evident marks of familiar acquaintance with the casque. Perhaps this is the only country of Christendom, even now, in which the profession of the law is a pursuit still more honorable and esteemed than that of arms—the best proof of a high and enviable civilization—but at the age of our narrative, the gentleman that was not of the Church, the calling which nearly monopolized all the learning of the times, was of necessity a soldier. Emich of Leiningen carried arms, therefore, as much in course as the educated man of this century reads his Horace or Virgil; and as nature had given him a vigorous frame, a hardy constitution, and a mind whose indifference to personal suffering amounted at times to ruthlessness, he was more successful in his trade of violence than many a pale and zealous student proves in the cultivation of letters.

The musing Count scarce raised his looks from the oaken floor he trod, as menial after menial appeared, moving with light step in the presence of one so dreaded and yet so singularly loved. At length a female, busy in some of the little offices of her sex, glided before his half-unconscious sight. The youth, the bloom, the playful air, the neat coif, the tight bodice, and the ample folds of the falling garments, at length seemed to fill his eye with the form of his companion.

"Is it thou, Gisela?" he said, speaking mildly, as one addresses a favored dependent. "How fareth it with the honest Karl?"

"I thank my lord the Count, his aged and wounded servant hath less of pain than is commonly his lot. The limb he has lost in the service of the House of Leiningen——"

"No matter for the leg, girl—thou art too apt to dwell upon that mischance of thy parent."

"Were my lord the Count to leave a limb on the field, it might be missed when he was hurried!"

"Thinkest, thou, child, that my tongue would never address the Emperor without naming the defect? Go to, Gisela; thou art a calculating hussy, and rarely permittest occasion to pass without allusion to this growing treasure of thy family. Are my people actively on the watch, with or without their limbs?"

"They are as their natures and humors tend. Blessed Saint Ursula knows where the officers of the country have picked up so ungainly a band, as these that now inhabit Hartenburg!" One drinketh, from the time his eyes open in the morn until they shut at even; another sweareth worse than the northern warriors that do these ravages in the Palatinate; this a foul dealer in ribaldry: that a glutton who never moveth lip but to swallow; and none, nay, not a swaggerer of them all, hath civil word for a maiden, though she be known as one esteemed in their master's household."

"They are my vassals, girl, and stouter men at need are not mustered in Germany."

"Stout in speech, and insolent of look, my Lord Count, but most odious company

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to all, of modest demeanor and of good intentions, in the hold."

"Thou hast been humored by thy mistress, girl, until thou sometimes forgettest discretion. Go and look my guests are informed that the hour of the banquet is at hand;—I await the pleasure of their presence."

Gisela, whose natural pertness had been somewhat heightened by an indulgent mistress, and in whom consciousness of more beauty than ordinarily falls to the share of females of her condition had produced freedom of language that sometimes amounted to temerity, betrayed her discontent in a manner very common to her sex, when it is undisciplined, or little restrained by a wholesome education. She pouted, taking care however that Emich's eye was again turned to the floor, tossed her head and quitted the room. Left to himself, the Count relapsed into his reverie. In this manner did several minutes pass unheeded.

"Dreaming, as usual, noble Emich, of escalades and excommunication!" cried a gay voice at his elbow, the speaker having entered the saloon unseen—"of revengeful priests, of vassalage, of shaven abbots, the confessional and penance dire, thy rights redressed, the frowning conclave, the Abbey cellar, thy morion, revenge, and, to sum up all, in a word that covers every deadly sin, that fallen angel the Devil!"

Emich forced a grim smile at this unceremonious and comprehensive salutation, accepting the offered hand of him who uttered it, however, with the frank freedom of a boon companion.

"Thou art right welcome, Albrecht," he replied, "for the moment is near when my ghostly guests should arrive; and to deal fairly by thee, I never feel myself quite equal to a single combat of wits with the pious knaves; but thy support will be enough, though the whole Abbey community were of the party."

"Ay, we are akin, we sons of Saint John and these bastards of Saint Benedict. Though more martial than your monks of the hill, we of the island are sworn to quite as many virtues. Let me see," he added, counting on his fingers with an air of bold licentiousness; "firstly are we vowed to celibacy, and your Benedictine is no less so—then are we self-dedicated to chastity, as is your Limburg monk; next we respect our oaths, as does your Father Bonifacius; then both are servants of the holy cross;" by a singular influence the speaker and the Count made the sacred symbol on their bosoms, as the former uttered the word, "and, doubt it not, I shall be the equal of the reverend brotherhood. They say sin can match sin, and saint should surely be saint's equal! But, Emich, thou art graver than becometh a hot carousal, like this we meditate!"

"And thou gay as if about to gallant the dames of Rhodes to one of thy island festivals!"

The Knight of Saint John regarded his attire with complacency, strutting by the side of his host, as the latter resumed his walk, with the air of a bird of admired plumage. Nor was the remark of the Count of Hartenburg misapplied, since his kinsman and guest had, in reality, expended more labor on his toilet than was customary in the absence of females, and in that rude hold. Unlike the stern and masculine Emich, who rarely divested himself of all his warlike gear, the sworn defender of the Cross appeared entirely in a peaceful guise, if the long rapier that dangled at his side, and which to a much later period formed an indispensable accompaniment of one of gentle condition, could be excepted from the implements of war. His doublet, fully decorated with embroidery, fringes, and loops, and dotted with buttons, was of a pale orange stuff, that was puffed and distended about his person, in the liberal amplitude of the prevailing fashion. The nether garment, which scarce appeared, however, essential as it might be, was of the same material, and cut with a similar expenditure of cloth. The hose were pink, and, rolling far above the knee, gave the effect of a rich coloring to the whole picture. He wore shoes whose upper-leather rose high against the small of the leg, buckles that covered the instep, and about the throat and wrists there was a lavish display of lace. The well-known Maltese cross dangled by a red ribbon, at a button-hole of the doublet; not above the heart, as is the custom at present among the chevaliers of the other hemisphere, but, by a vagary of taste, so low as to demonstrate, if,

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indeed, there is any allusion intended by the accidental position of these jewels, that the honorable badge was assumed in direct reference to that material portion of the human frame which is believed to be the repository of good cheer; an interpretation that, in the case of Albrecht of Viederbach, the knight in question, was perhaps much nearer to the truth than he would have been willing to own. After poising himself, first on the point of one shoe, and then on the other, smoothing his ruffles, shoving the rapier more aside, and otherwise adjusting his attire to his mind, the professed soldier of Saint John of Jerusalem pursued the discourse.

"I am decent, kinsman," he replied; "fit to be a guest at thy hospitable board, if thou wilt, in the absence of its fair mistress, but beyond that unworthy to be named. As for the dames of our unhappy and violated Rhodes, dear cousin, thou knowest little of their humors, if thou fanciest that this rude guise would have any charm in their refined eyes. Our knights were used to bring into the island the taste and improvements of every distant land; and small though it be, there are few portions of the earth, in which the human arts, for so I call the decoration of the human body, flourished more than in our circumscribed, valiant, and much-regretted Rhodes. Thus was it, at least, until the fell Ottoman triumphed!"

"'Fore God, I had thought thee sworn to all sorts of modesty, in speech, life, and other abstinences!"

"And art thou not sworn, most mutinous Emich, to obey thy liege lords, the Emperor and the Elector—nay, for certain of thy lands and privileges, art thou not bound to knight's service and obedience to the holy Abbot of Limburg?"

"God's curse on him and on all the others of that grasping brotherhood!"

"Aye, that is but the natural consequence of thy oath, as this doublet is of mine. If the rigid performance of a vow is as agreeable to the body, as we are taught it may be healthful to the soul, Count of Leiningen, where would be the merit of observance? I never don these graceful garments, but a wholesome remembrance of watchful nights passed on the ramparts, of painful sieges and watery trenches, or of sickly cruises against the Mussulmans, do not present themselves in the shape of past penances. In this manner do we sweeten sin, by our bodily pains, and by the memory of hours of virtuous hardships!"

"By the three sainted Kings of Koeln, and the eleven thousand virgins of that honored city, Master Albrecht! but thou wert much favored in thy narrow island, if it were permitted to thee to sin in this fashion, with the certainty of tempering punishment with so light service! These griping monks of Limburg make much of their favors, and he who would go with a safe skin, must needs look to an indulgence had and well paid for, in advance. I know not the number of goodly casks of the purest Rhenish that little sallies of humor may have cost me, first and last, in this manner of princely expenditure; but certain am I, that did occasion offer, the united tributes would leave little empty space in Prince Friedrich's vaunted Tun, in his ample cellars of Heidelberg!"

"I have often heard of that royal receptacle of generous liquor, and have meditated a pilgrimage in honor of its capacity. Does the Elector receive noble travellers with a hospitality suited to his rank and means?"

"That doth he, and right willingly, though this war presses sorely, and giveth him other employment. Thy wayfaring will not be weary, for thou mayst see the towers of Heidelberg from off these hills, and a worthy steed might be pricked from this court of mine into that of Duke Friedrich in a couple of hours of hard riding."

"When the merits of thy cellar are exhausted, noble Emich, it will be in season to put the Tun to the proof," replied the Knight of Rhodes, "as our esteemed friend here, the Abbé, will maintain, in the face of all the reformers with which our Germany is infested."

In introducing another character, we claim the reader's patience for a moment of digression. Whatever may be said of the merits and legality of the Reformation, effected chiefly by the courage of Luther (and we are neither sectarian nor unbeliever, to deny the sacred origin of the Church from which he dissented,) it is very generally admitted, that the long and undisputed sway of the prevailing authority of that age, had led to abuses, which called loudly for some change in its

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administration. Thousands of those who had devoted their lives to the administrations of the altar, were quite as worthy of the sacred office as it falls to man's lot to become; but thousands had assumed the tonsure, the cowl, or the other symbols of ecclesiastical duty, merely to enjoy the immunities and facilities the character conferred. A long and nearly undisputed monopoly of letters, the influence obtained by the unnatural union between secular and religious power, and the dependent condition of the public mind, the legitimate consequence of both, induced all who aspired to moral preëminence, to take this, the most certain, because the most beaten, of the paths that lead to this species of ascendency. It is not alone to the religion of Christendom, as it existed in the time of Luther, that we are to look for an example of the baneful consequence of spiritual and temporal authority, as blended in human institutions. Christian or Mahommedan, Catholic or Protestant, the evil comes in every case from the besetting infirmity which tempts the strong to oppress the weak, and the powerful to abuse their trust. Against this failing there seems to be no security but an active and certain responsibility. So long as the severe morality required of its ministers, by the Christian faith, is uncorrupted by any gross admixture of worldly advantage, there is reason to believe that the altar, at least, will escape serious defilement; but no sooner are these fatal enemies admitted to the sanctuary, than a thousand spirits, prompted by cupidity, rush rashly into the temple, willing to bear with the outward exactions of the faith, in order to seek its present and visible rewards.

However pure may be a social system, or a religion, in the commencement of its power, the possession of an undisputed ascendency lures all alike into excesses fatal to consistency, to justice, and to truth. This is a consequence of the independent exercise of human volition, that seems nearly inseparable from human frailty. We gradually come to substitute inclination and interest for right, until the moral foundations of the mind are sapped by indulgence, and what was once regarded with the aversion that wrong excites in the innocent, gets to be not only familiar, but justifiable by expediency and use. There is no more certain symptom of the decay of the principles requisite to maintain even our imperfect standard of virtue, than when the plea of necessity is urged in vindication of any departure from its mandate, since it is calling in the aid of ingenuity to assist the passions, a coalition that rarely fails to lay prostrate the feeble defences of a tottering morality.

It is no wonder, then, that the world, at a period when religious abuses drove even churchmen reluctantly to seek relief in insubordination, should exhibit bold instances of the flagrant excesses we have named. Military ambition, venality, love of ease, and even love of dissipation, equally sought the mantle of religion as cloaks to their several objects, and if the reckless cavalier was willing to flesh his sword on the body of the infidel, in order that he might live in men's estimation as a hero of the cross, so did the trifler, the debauchee, and even the wit of the capital, consent to obtain circulation by receiving an impression which gave currency to all coin, whether of purer or of baser metal, since it bore the outward stamp of the Church of God.

"Reformers, or rather revilers, for that is the term they most merit," returned the Abbé, alluded to in the last speech of Albrecht of Viederbach, "I consign without remorse to the devil. As for this pledge of our brave Knight of Saint John, noble Count Emich, so far as I am concerned, it shall be redeemed: for I am certain the cellars of Heidelberg can resist a heavier inroad than any that is likely to invade them by such means. But I am late from my chamber, and I had hoped, ere this, to have seen our brethren of Limburg! I hope no unnecessary misunderstanding is likely to deprive us of the satisfaction of their presence, Lord Count?"

"Little fear of that, so far as it may depend on any disappointment in a feast. If ever the devil tempted these monks of the hill, it has been in the shape of gluttony. Were I to judge by the experience of forty years passed in their neighborhood, I should think they deem abstinence an eighth deadly sin."

"Your Benedictine is privileged to consider hospitality a virtue, and the Abbot has fair license for the indulgence of some little cheer. We will not judge them harshly,

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"Go! Ulrike!—leave me with my sins."—*The Heidenmauer.*

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therefore, but form our opinions of their merits by their deeds. Thou hast many servitors without, to do them honor to-night, Lord Emich."

The Count of Leiningen frowned, and, ere he answered, his eye exchanged a glance with that of his kinsman, which the Abbé might have interpreted into a hidden meaning, had it attracted his observation.

"My people gather loyally about their lord, for they have heard of his succor sent by the Elector to uphold the lazy Benedictines," was the reply. "Four hundred mercenaries lie within the Abbey walls this night, Master Latouche, and it should not cause surprise that the vassals of Emich of Hartenburg are ready with hand and sword to do service in his defence. God's mercy! The cunning priests may pretend alarm, but if any here hath cause to be afraid, truly it is the rightful and wronged lord of the Jaegerthal!"

"Thy situation, Cousin of Hartenburg," observed the wearer of the cross of Saint John, "is, in sooth, one of masterly diplomacy. Here dost thou stand at sword's point with the Abbot of Limburg, ready at need to exchange deadly thrusts, and to put this long-disputed supremacy on the issue of battle, while thou callest on the keeper of thy cellar to bring forth the choicest of its contents, in order to do hospitality and honor to thy mortal foe! This beateth, in all niceties, Monsieur Latouche, the situation of an abbé of thy quality, who is scarce churchman enough to merit salvation, nor yet deep enough in sin to be incontinently damned in the general mass of evil-doers."

"It is to be hoped that we shall share the common lot of mortals, which is to receive more grace than they merit," returned the Abbé, a title that in fact scarce denoted one seriously devoted to the Church. "But I trust this present meeting between the hostile powers may prove amicable; for, not to conceal the truth, unlike our friend the Knight here, I am of none of the belligerent orders."

"Hark!" exclaimed the host, lifting a finger to command attention. "Heard ye aught?"

"There is much of the music of thy growlers in the courts, cousin, and some oaths in a German that needs be translated to be understood; but that blessed signal the supper-bell is still mute."

"Go to!—'Tis the Abbot of Limburg and his brethren, Fathers Siegfried and Cuno. Let us to the portal, to do them usual honor."

As this was welcome news to both the Knight and the Abbé, they manifested a suitable desire to be foremost in paying the required attention to a personage as important in that region as the rich and powerful chief of the neighboring religious establishment.

CHAPTER VI.

"Why not?—The deeper sinner, better saint."
—BYRON.

A WILD and plaintive note had been sounded on a horn far in the valley toward the hill of Limburg. This melodious music was of common occurrence, for of all that dwell in Europe, they who inhabit the banks of the Rhine, the Elbe, the Oder, and the Danube, with their tributaries, are the most addicted to the cultivation of sweet sounds. We hear much of the harshness of the Teutonic dialects, and of the softness of those of Latin origin; but, Venice and the regions of the Alps excepted, Nature has amply requited for the inequality that exists between the languages, by the difference in the organs of speech. He who journeys in those distant lands must, as a rule, expect to hear German warbled and Italian in a grand crash, though exceptions are certainly to be found in both cases. But music is far more common on the vast plains of Saxony than on the Campagna Felice, and it is no uncommon occurrence to be treated by a fair-haired postilion of the former country, as he slowly mounts a hill, with airs on the horn that would meet with favor in the orchestra of a capital. It was one of these melancholy and peculiar strains which now gave the signal to the spies of Count Emich that his clerical guests had quitted the convent.

"Heard ye aught, brothers?" demanded Father Bonifacius of the companions who rode at his side, nearly at the same moment that the Lord of Leiningen put the same question in his hold; "that horn spoke in a meaning strain!"

"We may be defeated in our wish to reach

the castle suddenly," returned the monk already known to the reader as Father Siegfried; "but though we fail in looking into Count Emich's secret with our own eyes, I have engaged one to do that office for us, and in a manner, I trust, that shall put us on the scent of his designs. Courage, most holy Abbot, the cause of God is not likely to fail for want of succor. When were the meek and righteous ever deserted?"

The Abbot of Limburg ejaculated, in a manner to express little faith in any miraculous interposition in behalf of his cure, and he drew about him the mantle that served in some degree to conceal his person, spurring the beast he rode only the quicker, from a feverish desire, if possible, to outstrip the sounds, which he intuitively felt were intended to announce his approach. The prelate was not deceived, for no sooner did the wild notes reach the castle, than the signal, which had caught the attention of its owner, was communicated to those within the walls.

At the expected summons there was a general movement among the idlers of the courts. Subordinate officers passed among the men, hurrying those away to their secret lodging-places who were intractable from excess of liquor, and commanding the more obedient to follow. In a very few minutes, and long before the monks, who, however, pricked their beasts to the utmost, had time to get near the hamlet even, all in the hold was reduced to a state of tranquil repose; the castle resembling the abode of any other powerful baron, in moments of profound security. Emich had seen to this disposition of his people in person, taking strict caution that no straggler should appear, to betray the preparations that existed within his walls. When this wise precaution was observed, he proceeded, with his two companions, to take a station near the door of the building more especially appropriated to the accommodation of himself and his friends, in order to await the arrival of the monks.

The moon had ascended high enough to illuminate the mountain-side, and to convert the brown towers and ramparts of Hartenburg into picturesque forms, relieved by gloomy shadows. The signals appeared to have thrown all who dwelt in the hamlet, as well as they who inhabited the frowning hold which overhung that secluded spot, into mute attention. For a few minutes the quiet was so deep and general, that the murmuring of the rivulet which meandered through the meadows was audible. Then came the swift clattering of hoofs.

"Our churchmen are in haste to taste thy Rhenish, noble Emich," said Albrecht of Viederbach, who rarely thought; "or is it a party of their sumpter mules that I hear in the valley!"

"Were the Abbott about to journey to some other convent of his order, or were he ready to visit his spiritual master of Spires, there is no doubt that many such cattle would be in his train; for of all lovers of fat cheer, Wilhelm of Venloo, who has been styled Bonifacius in his baptism of office, is he that most worships the fruits of the earth. I would he and all his brotherhood were spiritually planted in the garden of Eden! They should be well watered with my tears!"

"The wish hath a saintly odor, but may not be accomplished without mortal aid—unless thou hast favor with the Prince Elector of Koeln, who might haply do thee that service, in the way of miracle."

"Thou triflest, knight, in a matter of great gravity," answered Emich, roughly; for, notwithstanding his inherited and deadly dislike of the particular portion of the Church which interfered with his own power, the Count of Hartenburg had all the dependence on superior knowledge that is the unavoidable offspring of a limited education. "The Prince Elector hath served many noble families in the way thou namest, and he might do honor to houses less deserving of his grace than that of Leiningen. But here cometh the Abbot and his boon associates. God's curse await them for their pride and avarice!"

The clattering of hoofs had been gradually increasing, and was now heard even on the pavement of the outer court; for in order to do honor to his guests, the Count had especially ordered there should be no delay or impediment from gate, portcullis or bridge.

"Welcome, and reverence for thy churchly office, right holy Abbot!" cried Emich, from whose lips had just parted the malediction, advancing officiously to aid the prelate

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in dismounting—"Thou art welcome, brothers both; worthy companions of thy respected and honored chief."

The churchmen alighted, assisted by the menials of Hartenburg, with much show of honor on the part of the Count himself, and on that of his friends. When fairly on their feet, they courteously returned the greetings.

"Peace be with thee, son, and with this cavalier and servitor of the Church!" said Father Bonifacius, signing with the rapid manner in which a Catholic priest scatters his benedictions. "St. Benedict and the Virgin take ye all in their holy keeping! I trust, noble Emich, we have not given thee cause of vexation, by some little delay?"

"Thou never comest amiss, father, be it at morn, or be it at even; I esteem Hartenburg more than honored, when thy reverend head passeth beneath its portals."

"We had every desire to embrace thee, son, but certain offices of religion, that may not be neglected, kept us from the pleasure. But let us within; for I fear the evening air may do injury to those that are uncloaked."

At this considerate suggestion, Emich, with much show of respect to his guests, ushered them into the apartment he had himself so lately quitted. Here recommenced the show of those wily courtesies which, in that semi-barbarous and treacherous age, often led men to a heartless and sometimes to a blasphemous trifling, with the most sacred obligations, to effect their purposes, and which, in our times, has degenerated to a deception, that is more measured perhaps, but which is scarcely less sophisticated and vicious. Much was said of mutual satisfaction at this opportunity of commingling spirits, and the blunt professions of the sturdy but politic baron were more than met by the pretending sanctity and official charity of the priest.

The Abbot of Limburg and his companions had come to the intended feast with vestments that partially concealed their characters; but when the outer cloaks and the other garments were removed, they remained in the usual attire of their order, the prelate being distinguished from his inferiors by those symbols of clerical rank which it was usual for one of his authority to display when not engaged in the ministrations of the altar.

When the guests were at their ease, the conversation took a less personal direction, for though rude and unnurtured as his own war-horse, as regards most that is called cultivation in our bookish days, Emich of Hartenburg wanted for none of the courtesies that became his rank, more especially as civilities of this nature were held to be worthy of a feudal lord, and in that particular region.

"'Tis said, reverend Abbot," continued the host, pushing the discourse to a point that might favor his own secret views, "that our common master, the Prince Elector, is sorely urged by his enemies, and that there are even fears a stranger may usurp the rule in the noble Castle of Heidelberg. Hast thou heard aught of his late distresses, or of the necessities that bear upon his house?"

"Masses have been said for his benefit in all our chapels, and there are hourly prayers that he may prevail against his enemies. In virtue of a concession made to the Abbey, by our common father at Rome, we offer liberal indulgences, too, to all that take up arms in this behalf."

"Thou art much united in love with Duke Friedrich, holy prelate!" muttered Emich.

"We owe him such respect as all should willingly pay to the strong temporal arm that shields them; our serious fealty is due alone to Heaven. But how comes it that so stout a baron, one so much esteemed in warlike exercises, and so well known in dangerous enterprises, rests in his doublet, at a time when his sovereign's throne is tottering? We had heard that thou wert summoning thy people, Herr Count, and thought it had been in the Elector's interest."

"Friedrich hath not of late given me cause to love him. If I have called my vassals about me, 'tis because the times teach every noble to be wary of his rights. I have consorted so much of late with my cousin of Viederbach, this self-denying Knight of Rhodes, that martial thoughts will obtrude even on the brain of one, peaceful and homebred as thy poor neighbor and penitent."

The Abbot bowed and smiled, like one who gave full credit to the speaker's words, while a by-play arose between the wandering

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and houseless knight, the Abbé, and the brothers of Limburg. In this manner did a few minutes wear away, when a flourish of trumpets announced that the expected banquet awaited its guests. Menials lighted the party to the hall in which the board was spread, and much ceremonious form was observed in assigning to each of the individuals the place suited to his rank and character. Count Emich, who in common was of a nature too blunt and severe to waste his efforts in superfluous breeding, now showed himself earnest to please, for he had at heart an object that he knew was in danger of being baffled by the more practised artifices of the monks. During the preliminary movements of the feast, which had all the gross and all the profuse hospitality which distinguished such entertainments, he neglected no customary observance. The robust and sensual Abbot was frequently plied with both cup and dish, while the inferior monks received the same agreeable attentions from Albrecht of Viederbach, and Monsieur Latouche, who, notwithstanding it suited his convenience to pass through life under the guise of a churchman, was none the worse at board or revel. As the viands and the generous liquors began to operate on the physical functions of the brothers, however, they insensibly dropped their masks, and each discovered more of those natural qualities which usually lay concealed from casual observation.

It was a rule of the Benedictines to practise hospitality. The convent door was never closed against the wayfarer, and he who applied for shelter and food was certain of obtaining both, administered more or less in a manner suited to the applicant's ordinary habits. The practice of a virtue so costly was a sufficient pretence for accumulating riches, and he who travels at this day in Europe will find ample proofs that the means of carrying into effect this law of the order were abundantly supplied. Abbeys of this particular class of monks are still of frequent occurrence in the forest cantons of Switzerland, Germany, and in most of the other Catholic states. But the gradual and healthful transfer of political power from clerical to laical hands, has long since shorn them of their temporal lustre. Many of these abbots were formerly princes of the empire, and several of the communities exercised sovereign sway over territories that have since taken to themselves the character of independent states.

While the spiritual charge and the mortifications believed to characterize a brotherhood of Benedictines were more especially left to a subordinate monk termed the prior, the abbot, or head of the establishment, was expected to preside not only over the temporalities, but at the board. This frequent communication with the vulgar interests of life, and the constant indulgence of its grosser gratifications, were but ill adapted to the encouragement of the monastic virtues. We have already remarked that the intimate connection between the interests of life and those of the church is destructive of apostolical character. This blending of God with Mammon, this device of converting the revealed ordinances of the Master of the Universe into a species of buttress to uphold temporal sway, though habit has so long rendered it familiar to the inhabitants of the other hemisphere, and even to a large portion of those who dwell in this, is, in our American eyes, only a little removed from blasphemy ; but the triumphs of the press, and the changes made by the steady advances of public opinion, have long since done away with a multitude of still more equivocal usages, that were as familiar to those who existed three centuries ago, as our own customs to us at this hour. When prelates were seen in armor, leading their battalions to slaughter, it is not to be supposed that other dignitaries of this privileged class would be more tender of appearances than was exacted by the opinions of the age.

Wilhelm of Venloo, known since his elevation as Bonifacius of Limburg, was not possessed of all that temporal authority, however, which tempted so many of his peers to sin. Still he was the head of a rich, powerful, and respected brotherhood, that had many allodial rights in lands beyond the Abbey walls, and which was not without its claims to the fealty of sundry dependants. Of vigorous mind and body, this dignified churchman commanded much influence by means of a species of character that often crosses us in life, a sturdy independence of thought and action that imposed on the credulous and

timid, and which sometimes caused the bold and intelligent to hesitate. His reputation was far greater for learning than for piety, and his besetting sin was well known to be a disposition to encounter the shock between the powers of mind and matter, as both were liable to be affected by deep potations and gross feeding—a sort of degeneracy to which all are peculiarly liable who place an unnatural check on the ordinary and healthful propensities of —just as one sense is known to grow in acuteness as it is deprived of a fellow. The Abbot loosened his robe, and threw his cowl still farther from his neck, while Emich pledged him in Rhenish, cup after cup; and by the time the meats were removed, and the powers of digestion, or we might better say of retention, would endure no more, his heavy cheeks became flushed, his bright, deeply-seated, and searching gray eyes flashed with a species of ferocious delight, and his lip frequently quivered, as the clay gave eloquent evidence of its enjoyment. Still his voice, though it had lost its rebuked and schooled tones, was firm, deep, and authoritative, and ever and anon he threw into his discourse some severe and pointed sarcasm, bitingly scornful. His subordinates, too, gave similar proofs of the gradual lessening of their caution, though in degrees far less imposing, we had almost said less grand, than that which rendered the sensual excitement of their superior so remarkable. Albrecht and the Abbé also betrayed, each in his own manner, the influence of the banquet, and all became garrulous, disputative, and noisy.

Not so with Emich of Hartenburg. He had eaten in a manner to do justice to his vast frame and bodily wants, and he drank fairly; but, until this moment, the nicest observer would have been puzzled to detect any decrease of his powers. The blue of his large leaden eyes became brighter, it is true, but their expression was yet in command, and their language courteous.

"Thou dost but little compliment to my poor fare, most holy Abbot," cried the host, as he witnessed a lingering look of the prelate, whose eye followed the delicious fragments of a wild boar from the hall.—"If the knaves have stinted thee in the choice of morsels, by St. Benedict! but the mountains of my chase can still furnish other animals of the kind.—How now——"

"I pray thee, mercy, noble Emich! Thy forester hath done thee fair justice with his spear; more savory beast never smoked at table."

"It fell by the hand of young Berchthold, the burgher of Duerckheim's orphan. 'Tis a bold youth in the forest, and I doubt not, his will one day be a ready hand in battle. Thou knowest him I mean, father, for he is often at the Abbey confessionals."

"He is better known to the prior than to one so busied with worldly cares as I. Is the youth at hand? I would fain render him thanks."

"Hear ye that, varlet! Bid my head forester appear. The reverend and noble Abbot of Limburg owes him grace."

"Didst thou say the youth was of Duerckheim?"

"Of that goodly town, reverend priest; and, though reduced by evil chances to be the ranger of my woods, a lad of mettle in the chase, and of no bad discourse in moments of ease."

"Thou claimest hard service, Cousin of Hartenburg, of these peaceful townsmen! Were they left freely to choose between the ancient duty of our convent, and this stirring life thou leadest the artisans, we should have more penitents within our walls."

The fealty of Duerckheim was a long mooted point between the corporation of Limburg and the house of Leiningen, and the allusion of the monk was not thrown away upon his host. Emich's brow clouded, and for a moment it threatened a storm; but, recovering his self-command, he answered in a tone of hilarity, though with sufficient coolness:—

"Thy words remind me of present affairs, reverend Bonifacius, and I thank thee that thou hast put a sudden check on festivities which were getting warm without an object." The Count arose, and filled to the brim a cup of horn, elaborately ornamented with gold, drawing the attention of all at table to himself by the action. "Nobles and reverend servants of God," he continued, "I drink to the health and happiness of the honored Wilhelm of Venloo, the holy Abbot of Limburg, and my loving neighbor. May his

brotherhood never know a worse guide, and may the lives and contentment of all that now belong to it be as lasting as the abbey walls."

Emich concluded the potent cup at a single draught. In order to do honor to the mitred monk, there had been placed by the side of Bonifacius a vessel of agate richly decorated with jewelry, an heir-loom of the house of Leiningen. While his host was speaking, the looks of the latter watched every expression of his countenance, through gray, overhanging, shaggy brows, that shaded the upper part of his face like a screen of shrubbery planted to shut out prying eyes from a close; and he paused when the health was given. Then, rising in his turn, he quaffed a compliment in return.

"I drink of this pure and wholesome liquor," he said, "to the noble Emich of Leiningen, to all of his ancient and illustrious house, to his and their present hopes, and to their final deliverance. May this goodly hold, and the happiness of its lord, endure as long as those walls of Limburg of which the count has spoken, and which, were his loving wishes consulted, would doubtless stand for ever."

"By the life of the Emperor, learned Bonifacius!" exclaimed Emich, striking his fist on the table with force, "you as much exceed one of my narrow wit in wishes, as in godliness, and other excellences! But I pretend not to set limits to my desires in your behalf, and throw the fault of my imperfect speech on a youth that had more to do with the sword than with the breviary. And now let us to serious concerns. It may not be known to you, Cousin of Viederbach, or to this obliging churchman who honors Hartenburg with his presence, that there has been subject of amicable dispute between the brotherhood of Limburg and my unworthy house, touching the matter of certain wines, that are believed by the one party to be its dues, and by the other to be a mere pious grace accorded to the Church——"

"Nay, noble Emich," interrupted the Abbot, "we have never held the point to be disputable in any manner. The lands in question are held of us in socage; and, in lieu of bodily service, we have long since commuted for the produce of vines that might be named."

"I cry you mercy; if there be dues at all, they come of naught else than knight's service. None of my name or lineage ever paid less to mortal!"

"Let it be thus," Bonifacius answered more mildly. "The question is of the amount of liquor, and not of the tenure whence it comes."

"Thou sayst right, wise Abbot, and I cry mercy of these listeners. State thou the matter, reverend Bonifacius, that our friends may know the humor on which we are madly bent."

The Count of Hartenburg succeeded in swallowing his rising ire, and made a gesture of courtesy toward the Abbot, as he concluded. Father Bonifacius rose again, and notwithstanding the physical ravages that excess was making within, it was still with the air of calmness and discipline that became his calling.

"As our upright and esteemed friend has just related," he said, "there is truly a point, of a light but unseemly nature to exist between so dear neighbors, open between him and us servants of God. The Counts of Leiningen have long considered it a pleasure to do favor to the Church, and in this just and commendable spirit, it is now some fifty years that, at the termination of each vintage, without regard to seasons or harvest, without stooping to change their habits at every change of weather, they have paid to our brotherhood——"

"Presented, priest!"

"Presented,—if such is thy will, noble Emich,—fifty casks of this gentle liquor that now warms our hearts toward each other, with brotherly and praiseworthy affection. Now, it has been settled between us, to avoid all future motive of controversy, and either the better to garnish our cellars, or to relieve the house of Hartenburg altogether of future imposition, that it shall be decided this night, whether the tribute henceforth shall consist of one hundred casks, or of nothing."

"By're Lady! A most important issue, and one likely to impoverish or to enrich!" exclaimed the Knight of Rhodes.

"As such we deem it," continued the monk, "and in that view, parchments of release, with all due appliances and seals, have been prepared by a clerkly scholar of Heidel-

berg. This indenture, duly executed," he added, drawing from his bosom the instruments in question, "yieldeth to Emich all the Abbey's rights to the vines in dispute, and this wanteth but his sign of arms and noble name to double their present duty."

"Hold!" cried the Chevalier of the Cross, whose faculties began already to give way, though it was only in the commencement of the debauch: "Here is matter might puzzle the Grand Turk, who sits in judgment in the very seat of Solomon! If thou renderest thy claims, and my cousin Emich yieldeth double tribute-money, both parties will be the worse, and neither possessed of the liquor!"

"In a merry mood, it hath been proposed that there shall be the trial of love and not of battle, between us, for the vines. The question is of liquor, and it is agreed,—St. Benedict befriend me if there be sin in the folly! to try on whose constitution the disputed liquor is the most apt to work good or evil. Let the Count of Hartenburg give to his parchment the virtue that hath already been given to this of ours, and we shall leave both in some place of observation;—then, when he alone is able to rise and seize on both, let him give the victor's cry; but should he fail of that power, and there be a servant of the Church ready, and able to grasp the instruments, why let him go, and think no more of land that he hath right merrily lost."

"By St. John of Jerusalem, but this is a most unequal contest—three monks against one poor baron in a trial of heads!"

"Nay, we think more of our honor, than to permit this wrong. The Count of Hartenburg hath full right to call in equal succor, and I have taken thee, gallant cavalier of Rhodes, and this learned Abbé, to be his chosen backers!"

"Let it be so!" cried the two in question, —"We ask no better service than to drain Count Emich's cellars to his honor and profit!"

But the lord of the hold had taken the matter, as indeed it was fully understood between the principals, to be a question on which depended a serious amount of revenue for all futurity. The wager had arisen in one of those wild contests for physical and gross supremacy, which characterize ages and countries of imperfect civilization; for next to deeds in arms and other manful exercises, like those of the chase and saddle, it was deemed honorable to be able to undergo the trials of the festive board with impunity. Nor should it occasion surprise to find churchmen engaged in these encounters; for, independently of our writing of an age when they appeared in the field, there is sufficient evidence that our own times are not entirely purified from so coarse abuses of the gown. But Bonifacius of Limburg, though a man of extensive learning and strong intellectual qualities, had a weakness on this particular point for which we may be driven to seek an explanation in his peculiar animal construction. He was of a powerful frame and sluggish temperament, both of which required strong excitement to be wrought up to the highest point of physical enjoyment; and neither the examples around him, nor his own particular opinions, taught him to avoid a species of indulgence that he found so agreeable to his constitution. With these serious views of a contest to which neither party would probably have consented, had not each great confidence in himself as a well-tried champion, both Emich and the Abbot required that the instruments should be openly read. The discharge of this duty was assigned to Monsieur Latouche, who forthwith proceeded to wade through a torrent of unintelligible terms, that were generated in the obscurity of feudal times for the benefit of the strong, and which are continued to our own period through pride of professional knowledge, a little quickened by a view to professional gain. On the subject of the true consideration of the respective releases, the instruments themselves were silent, though nothing material was wanting to give them validity, especially when supported by a good sword; or the power of the Church, to which the parties looked respectively in the event of flaws.

Count Emich listened warily as his guest the Abbé red clause after clause of the deed. Occasionally his eye wandered to the firm countenance of the Abbot, betraying habitual distrust of his hereditary and powerful enemy, but it was quickly riveted again on the heated features of the reader.

"This is well," he said, when both papers had been examined: "These vines are to

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remain forever with me and mine, without claim from any grasping churchman, so long as grass shall grow or water run, or henceforth they pay double tribute, a tax that will leave little for the cellar of their rightful lord."

"Such are our terms, noble Emich. But to confirm the latter condition, thy seal and name are wanting to the instrument."

"Were the latter to be written by a good sword, none could do the office better than this poor arm, reverend Abbot; but thou knowest well, that my youth was too much given to warlike and other manly exercises befitting my rank, to allow much time for acquiring clerkly skill. By the holy Virgins of Koeln! it were, in sooth, a shame to confess, that one of my class in these stirring times had leisure for such lady games! Bring hither an eagle's feather—hand of mine never yet touched aught from meaner wing—that I may do justice to the monks."

The necessary implements being produced, the Count of Hartenburg proceeded to execute the instrument on his part. The wax was speedily attached and duly impressed with the bearings of Leiningen, for the noble wore a signet-ring of massive size, ready at all times to give this token of his will. But when it became necessary to subscribe the name, a signal was made to a domestic, who disappeared in quest of the Count's man of charge. This individual manifested some reluctance to perform the customary office, but, as there was just then a clamorous dialogue among the party at the table, he seized the moment to examine into the nature of the document, and the consideration that was to decide the ownership of the vineyard. Grinning in satisfaction, at a species of payment in which he held it to be impossible Lord Emich could fail to acquit himself honorably, the dependant took the hand of his master, and, accustomed to the duty, he so guided it as to leave a very legible and creditable signature. When this had been done, and the papers were properly witnessed, the Count of Hartenburg glanced suspiciously from the deed in his hand to the indomitable face of the Abbot, as if he still half repented of the act. "Look you, Bonifacius," he said, shaking a finger,—"Should there be flaw, or doubt of any intention in this our covenant, sword of mine shall cut it!"

"First earn the right, Count of Leiningen, The deeds are of equal virtue, and he who would lay claim to their benefits must win the wager. We are but poor brothers of St. Benedict, and little worthy to be named with warlike barons and devoted followers of St. John, but we have an humble trust in our patron."

"By St. Benedict, it shall pass for a miracle, if thou prevailest!" shouted Emich, yielding the deed in a burst of delight. "Away with these cups of agate and horn, and bring forth vessels of glass, that all may see we deal fairly by each other, in this right manly encounter. Look to your wits, monks. —By the word of a cavalier, your Latin will do little service in this dispute."

"Our trust is in our patron," answered Father Siegfried, who had already done so much honor to the banquet, as to give reason to believe, that, in his case, the fraternity leaned upon a fragile staff. "He never yet deserted his children, when fairly enlisted in a good cause."

"You are cunning in reasons, fathers," put in the knight—"and I doubt not that sufficient excuses would be forthcoming, were you pushed to justify service to the devil."

"We suffer for the Church," was the Abbot's answer, after taking a bumper in obedience to a signal from his host. "We hold it to be commendable to struggle with the flesh, that our altars may flourish."

As soon as executed, the two deeds had been placed on a high and curiously wrought vessel of silver, that contained cordials, and which occupied the centre of the board, and more fitting cups having been brought, the combatants were compelled to swallow draught after draught, at signals from Emich, who, like a true knight, saw that each man showed loyalty. But, as the conflict was between men of great experience in this species of contention, and as it endured hours, we deem it unworthy of the theme to limit its description to a single chapter. Before closing the page, however, we shall digress for a moment, in order to express our opinions concerning the great human properties involved in this sublime strife.

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It has been the singular fortune of America to be the source of numberless ingenious theories, that, taking their rise in the other hemisphere, have been let loose upon the world to answer ends that we shall not stop to investigate. The dignified and beneficed prelate maintains there is no worship of God within our land, probably because there are no dignified and beneficed prelates; a sufficiently logical conclusion for all who believe in the efficacy of that self-denying class of Christians; while the neophyte, in some lately invented religion, denounces us all in a body, as so many miserable bigots devoted to Christ! In this manner is a pains-taking and plain-dealing nation of near fourteen millions of souls kept, as it were, in abeyance in the opinions of the rest of mankind, one deeming them as much beyond, as another fancies them to be short of, truth. In the fearful catalogue of our deadly sins, is included a propensity to indulge in excesses similar to that it is now our office to record. As we are confessedly democrats, dram-drinking in particular has been pronounced to be a "democratic vice."

It has been our fortune to have lived in familiarity with a greater variety of men, either considered in reference to their characters or their conditions, than ordinarily falls to the lot of any one person. We have visited many lands, not in the capacity of a courier, but staidly and soberly, as becomes a grave occupation, setting up our household gods, and abiding long enough to see with our eyes and to hear with our ears; and we feel emboldened to presume on these facts, in order to express a different opinion, amid the flood of assertions that has been made by those who certainly have no better claim to be heard. And, firstly, we shall here say that, as in the course of justice, an intelligent, upright, single-minded, and discriminating witness is, perhaps, the rarest of all desirable instruments in effecting its sacred ends, so do we acknowledge a traveller, entitled to full credit, to be the mortal of all others the least likely to be found.

The art of travelling, we apprehend, is far more practised than understood. To us it has proved a laborious, harassing, puzzling, and oftentimes a painful pursuit. To divest one's self of impressions made in youth; to investigate facts without referring their merits to a standard bottomed on a foundation no better than habit; to analyze, and justly to compare the influence of institutions, climate, natural causes, and practice; to separate what is merely exception from that which forms the rule; or even to obtain and carry away accurate notions of physical things, and, most of all, to possess the gift of imparting these results comprehensively and with graphical truth, requires a combination of time, occasion, previous knowledge, and natural ability, that rarely falls to the lot of a single individual. One assumes the task prepared by acquaintance with established opinions, which are commonly no more than prejudices, the result of either policy, or of the very difficulties just enumerated; and he goes on his way, not only ready but anxious to receive the proofs of what he expects, limiting his pleasure to the sort of delight that dependent minds feel in following the course pointed out by those that are superior. As the admitted peculiarities of every people are sufficiently apparent, he converts self-evident facts into collateral testimony, and faithfully believes and imagines all that is concealed on the strength of that which is obvious. For such a traveller time wears away men and things in vain; he accords his belief to the last standard opinion of his sect, with a devotion to convention that might purchase salvation in a better cause. To him Vesuvius is just as high, produces the same effect in the view, and has exactly the same outline as before the crater fell; and he watches the workmen disinterring a house at its base, and he goes away rejoicing at having witnessed the resurrection of a Roman dwelling after eighteen hundred years of interment, simply because it is the vulgar account that Pompeii was lost for that period. If he should happen to be a scholar, what is his delight in following a cicerone (a title assumed by some wily *servitore di Piazza*) to the little garden that overlooks the Roman Forum, and in fancying that he stands upon the Tarpeian Rock! His faith in moral qualities, his graduation of national virtue, and his views of manners, are equally the captives of the last popular rumor. A Frenchman may roll incontinently in the *gras de Paris*, filled with an alcohol inflammable as gunpowder,

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and in his eyes it shall pass for pure animal light-heartedness, since it is out of all rule for a Frenchman to be intoxicated, while the veriest tyro knows that the nation dances to a man! The gallant general, the worshipful alderman, the right honorable adviser of the king, may stammer around a subject for half an hour, in St. Stephen's, in a manner to confound all conclusion, and generalize so completely as to baffle particularity, and your hearer shall go away convinced of the excellence of the great school of modern eloquence, because the orator has been brought up at the "feet of Gamaliel." When one thoroughly imbued with this pliant faculty gets into a foreign land, with what a diminished reverence for his own does he journey! As few men are endowed with sufficient penetration to pierce the mists of received opinion, fewer still are they that are so strong in right as to be able to stem its tide. He who precedes his age is much less likely to be heard, than he who lingers in its rear: and when the unwieldy body of the mass reaches the eminence on which he has long stood the object of free comment, it may be assumed as certain, that they who were his bitterest deriders when his doctrine was new, will be foremost in claiming the honors of the advance. In short, to instruct the world, it is necessary to watch the current, and to act on the public mind like the unseen rudder, by slight and imperceptible variations, avoiding, as a seaman would express it, any very rank sheer, lest the vessel should refuse to mind her helm and go down with the stream.

We have been led into these reflections by frequent opportunities of witnessing the facility with which opinions are adopted concerning ourselves, because they have come from the pens of those who have long contributed to amuse and instruct us, but which are perfectly valueless, both from the unavoidable ignorance of those who utter them, and from the hostile motives that gave them birth. To that class which would wish to put in a claim to *bon ton*, by undervaluing their countrymen, we have nothing to say, since they are much beyond improvement, and are quite unable to understand all the high and glorious consequences dependent on the great principles of which this republic is the guardian. Their fate was long since settled by a permanent and wise provision of human feeling; but, presuming on the opportunities mentioned, and long habits of earnest observation in the two hemispheres, we shall conclude this digression by merely adding, that it is the misfortune of man to abuse the gifts of God, let him live in what country or under what institutions he may. Excess of the description in question is the failing of every people, nearly in proportion to their means; nor are there any certain preventives against a vice so destructive, but absolute want, or a high cultivation of the reasoning faculties.

He who has accurately ascertained how far the people of this republic are behind or before the inhabitants of other lands, in mental improvement and moral qualities, will not be far from the truth in assigning to them a correspondent place in the scale of sobriety. It is true that many foreigners will be ready enough to deny this position, but we have had abundant opportunities of observing, that all those who visit our shores do not come sufficiently prepared, by observation at home, to make just comparisons, and what we have here said has not been ventured without years of close and honest investigation. We shall gladly hail the day when it can be said, that not an American exists so lost to himself as to trifle with the noblest gift of the Creator; but we cannot see the expediency of attaining an end, desirable even as this, by the concession of premises that are false.

CHAPTER VII.

"What a thrice-double ass
Was I, to take this drunkard for a god!"
—*Caliban.*

PHYSICAL qualities are always prized in proportion to the value that is attached to those that are purely intellectual. So long as power and honor depend on the possession of brute force, strength and agility are endowments of the last importance, on the same principle that they render the tumbler of more account in his troop; and he who has ever had occasion to mingle much with the brave, and subject to a qualification that will readily be understood, we might add, the noble savages of this continent, will have remarked that, while the orators are in general

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a class who have cultivated their art for want of qualifications to excel in that which is deemed still more honorable, the first requisite in the warrior is stature and muscle. There exists a curious document to prove how much even their successors, a people in no degree deficient in acuteness, have been subject to a similar influence. We allude to a register that was made of the thews and sinews among the chiefs of the army of Washington, during the moment of inaction that preceded the recognition of Independence. By this report it would seem, that the animal entered somewhat into the ideas of our fathers, when they made their original selection of leaders, a circumstance that we attribute to the veneration that man is secretly disposed to show to physical perfection, until a better training and experience have taught him there is still a superior power. Our first impressions are almost always received through the senses, and the connexion between martial prowess and animal force seems so natural, that we ought not to be surprised that a people so peaceful and unpractised, in their simplicity, betrayed a little of this deference to appearances. Happily, if they sometimes put matter into stations which would have been better filled by mind, the honesty and zeal that were so general in the patriotic ranks carried the country through in triumph.

It was a consequence of the high favor enjoyed by all manly or physical qualities in the sixteenth century, that men were even prized for their excesses. Thus he who could longest resist the influence of liquor was deemed, in a more limited sense, as much a hero as he who swung the heaviest mace, or pointed the surest cannon in battle. The debauch in which the Abbot of Limburg and his neighbor Emich of Leiningen were now engaged, was one of no unusual nature; for, in a country in which prelates appeared in so many other doubtful characters, it should not excite surprise that some of the class were willing to engage in a strife that had little danger, while it was so highly in favor with the noble and the great.

The reader will have seen that great progress had been made toward the issue of the celebrated encounter it is our duty to relate, even before its precise object had been formally introduced among the contending parties. But while the monks came to the struggle apprised of its motive, and prepared at all points to maintain the reputation of their ancient and hospitable brotherhood, the Count of Leiningen, with a sullen reliance on his own powers, that was somewhat increased by his contempt for priestcraft, had neglected to bestow the same care on his auxiliaries. It is scarcely necessary to add that both the Abbé and the Knight of Rhodes had become heated to garrulousness, before they perfectly understood the nature of the service that was expected at their hands, or, we ought rather to say, of their heads. With this explanation we shall resume the narrative, taking up its thread some two hours later than the moment when it was last dropped.

At this particular juncture of the strife, Fathers Siegfried and Cuno had become thoroughly warmed with their endeavors, and habitual and profound respect for the Abbot was gradually giving way before the quickening currents of their blood. The eyes of the former glistened with a species of forensic ferocity, for he was ardently engaged on a controversial point with Albrecht of Viederbach, all of whose faculties appeared to be rapidly exhaling with his potations. The other Benedictine and the Abbé from time to time mingled in the dispute, in the character of seconds, while the two most interested in the issue sat, warily collecting their powers, and sternly regarding each other, like men who knew they were not engaged in idle sport.

"This is well, with thy tales of L'Isle Adam, and the Ottoman power," continued Father Siegfried, pursuing the discourse from a point beyond which we consider it unnecessary to record all that passed.—"This will do to repeat to the dames of our German courts, for the journey between these Rhenish plains and yonder island of Rhodes is far, and few are inclined to make it, in order to convict thy chiefs of neglect, or their sworn followers of forgetfulness of their vows."

"By the quality of my order! reverend Benedictine, thou pushest words to unseemliness! Is it not enough, that the chosen and the gentlest of Europe should devote soul and body to services that would better become

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thy lazy order—that all that is noble and brave should abandon the green fields and pleasant rivers of their native lands, to endure hot suns and sultry winds from Africa, in order to keep the unbeliever in his limits, but they must be taunted with gibes like these? Go, count the graves and number the living, if thou wouldst learn the manner in which our illustrious master held out against Solyman, or wouldst know the services of his knights!"

"It would sound ill in thy ears, were I to bid thee enter purgatory, to inquire into the fruits of our masses and prayers, and yet one and the other are equally easy to perform. Thou knowest well, that Rhodes is no longer a Christian island, and that none bearing the cross dare be seen on its shores. Go to, Count Albrecht, thy order is fallen into disuse, and it is better where it is, hid beneath the snowy mountains of the country of Nice, than it might be in the front ranks of Christendom. There is not a crone in Germany that does not bewail the backsliding of an order so esteemed of old, or a maiden that does not speak lightly of its deeds!"

"Heavenly patience! hearest thou this, Monsieur Latouche? and from the mouth of a chanting Benedictine, who passeth his days between safe walls of stone, here in the heart of the Palatinate, and his nights on a warm pallet, beyond sound even of the rushing winds, unless, in sooth, he be not sent on offices of midnight charity among the believing wives of the faithful!"

"Boy! dost presume to scandalize the Church, and dare its anger?" demanded Bonifacius, in a voice of thunder.

"Reverend Abbot," answered Albrecht, crossing himself, for habit and policy equally held him subject to the predominant authority of the age, "the little I say is more directed to the man than to his cloth."

"Let him give utterance to all he fancies," interrupted the wily Siegfried. "Is not a knight of Rhodes immaculate, and shall we refuse him right of speech?"

"It is held at the court of the chivalrous Valois," observed the Abbé, who perceived it was necessary to interfere, in order to preserve the peace, "that the defence of Rhodes was of exceeding valor, and few survived it, who did not meet with high honors from Christian hands. We have seen numberless of the brave knights among us, in the most esteemed houses of Paris, and at the merry castle of Fontainebleau, and believe me, none were more sought or better honored! The scars of even Marignano and of Pavia are less prized than those given by the hands of the infidel."

"Thou dost well, my learned and self-denying brother," answered Siegfried, with a sneer, "to remind us of the fight of Pavia, and of thy great master's present abode! Are these tidings of late from the Castiles, or is it not permitted to thy prince to dispatch couriers to his own capital?"

"Nay, reverend monk, thou pressest with unkind allusions, and forgettest that, like thee, we are both servitors of the Church."

"We count thee not—one nor the other. Martyred St. Peter! what would become of thy keys were they intrusted to the keeping of such hands!—Go, doff thy vanities—lay aside that attire of velvet, if though wouldst be known as of the flock."

"Master Latouche," exclaimed Emich, who was boiling with indignation, but who preserved his self-command in order to circulate the cups, and to see that each mad did true service in the prescribed contest, "tell him of his brother of Wittenberg, and of these late doings in the hive. Stick that thorn into his side, and thou shalt see him shrink like a jaded and galled steed under a pointed spur! Who art thou, and why dost thou disturb my pleasures?"

This sudden interruption of himself was addressed by the baron to a youth, in neat but modest attire, who had just entered the banqueting-room, and who, passing by the menial that filled the glasses at the beck of his master's hand, now stood, with a firm but respectful mien, at the elbow of the speaker.

"'Tis Berchthold, mr lord's forester. They bid me come to do your pleasure, noble Count."

"Thou art seasonably arrived to keep the peace between a sworn knight of Rhodes and a garrulous monk of Limburg. This reverend Abbot would do thee favor, boy."

Berchthold bowed respectfully, and turned towards the prelate.

"Thou art the orphan of our ancient liege-

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man, he who bore thy name, and was well esteemed among the townsmen of Duerckheim?"

"I am the son of him your reverence means, but that he was liegeman of any of Limburg, I deny."

"Bravely answered, boy!" shouted Emich, striking his fist on the table so hard as to threaten destruction to all it held: "Aye, and as becomes thy master's follower! Hast enough, Father Bonifacius, or wilt dip deeper into the youth's catechism?"

"The young man has been tutored to respect his present ease," returned the Abbot, affecting indifference equally to the exultation of the Count and to the disrespect of his forester. "When he next comes to our confessionals, there will be occasion to give him other schooling."

"God's truth! that hour may never happen. We are half disposed to live on in our sins, and to take soldier's fortune, in these stirring times, which is ever the chance of sudden death, without the Church's passport. We are fast getting of this mind—are we not, brave Berchthold?"

The youth bowed respectfully, but without answering, for he saw by the inflamed countenances and swimming eyes of all at the table, that the moment was one in which explanations would be useless. Had it been possible to doubt the cause of the scene he witnessed, the manner in which glass after glass was swallowed, at the will of the cupbearer, would have explained its nature. But, far advanced as Father Bonifacius had now become in inebriety, in common with the other guests, he retained enough of his faculties, to see that the words of Emich contained an allusion of a dangerously heretical character.

"Thou art resolved to despise our counsel and our warnings!" he exclaimed, glancing fiercely at one and the other. "'Twere better to say at once, that thy wish is to see the walls of Limburg Abbey lying on the side of Limburg hill."

"Nay, reverend and honored priest, thou pushest a few hasty words beyond their meaning. What is it to a Count of the noble house of Leiningen, that a few monks find shelter for their heads, and ease for their souls, beneath a consecrated roof within cannon-shot of his own towers. If thy walls do not tumble until hand of mine helps to unsettle them, they may stand till the fallen Angel that set them up, shall aid in their overthrow. Truly, Father Bonifacius, for a godly community, this tale of thy sanctuary's origin makes it of none of the best parentage!"

"Hear ye that!" sputtered Albrecht of Viederbach, who, though his tongue had continued to sound a sort of irregular accompaniment to his cousin's speeches, was no longer able to articulate clearly—"Hear ye that! imp of St. Benedict! The devil set ye up, and the devil will be your downfall. L'Isle Adam is a saint to thy holiest; and his—good—sword——"

At this word, the Knight of Rhodes succumbed, losing his balance in an animated effort to gesticulate, and fairly falling under the table. A sarcastic smile crossed the Abbot's face, at this overthrow of one of his adversaries, while Emich scowled in disdain at the ignoble exhibition made by his kinsman; who finding it impossible to rise, resigned himself to sleep on the spot where he had fallen.

"Swallow thy Rhenish, monk, and count not on the slight advantage thou hast got in the overthrow of that prating fool," said the host, whose tones grew less and less amicable, as the plot thickened—"But to a more fitting subject; Berchthold is worthy of his lord, and is a youth that think of things as things appear. We may quit thy confessionals for divers reasons, as thou knowest. Here is the Monk of Erfurth! Ha! what think you of his new teaching, and of the manner in which he advises the faithful to come to the altar? You have had him at Rome, and at Worms, and among ye in many councils, yet the honest man stands fast in all reasonable opinions. Thou hast heard of Luther, is it not so, young Berchthold?"

"'Tis certain, my Lord Count, that few in the Jaergerthal escape the tidings of his name."

"Then are they in danger of a most damnable heresy!" interrupted Bonifacius, in a voice of thunder. "Why tell me of this driveller of Erfurth, Lord Emich, if thou art not in secret praying that his rebellious wishes may prosper at the Church's cost!

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But we mark thee, irreverent Count, and hard and griping penance may yet purge thee of these prurient fancies—" Here the Abbot, inflamed as he was with wine and resentment, paused; for the silent monk, Father Cuno, fell from his seat like a soldier shot in battle; the simple inferior having entered into the trial of heads, more with a relish for the liquor than with any thought of victory, and having, in consequence, done so much honor to the potations, as to become an easy sacrifice to the common enemy. The Abbot looked at his prostrate follower with grim indifference, showing by his hard, scowling, and angry eye, that he deemed the loss of little moment to the main result.

"What matters the impotency of a fool!" he muttered, turning away to his principal and only dangerous opponent, with a full return of all his angry feelings:—"That the devils are suffered to gain a momentary and specious triumph, we are well aware, Baron of Hartenburg——"

"By my father's bones, proud priest, but thou strangely forgettest thyself! Am I not a prince of Leiningen, that one of the cowl should please to call me less?"

"I should have said the Summer Landgrave!" answered Bonifacius sneeringly, for long-smothered hatred was beginning to break through the feeble barriers that their reeling faculties still preserved. "I crave pardon of your highness; but a short reign leaves brief recollections. Even thy subjects, illustrious Emich, may be forgiven, that they know not their sovereign's title. The coronet that is worn from June to September scarce gets the fit of the head!"

"It was worn longer, Abbot, than ever head of thine will wear a saintly crown. But I forget my ancient house, and the forbearance due to a guest, in honest anger at an artful and malignant monk!"

Bonifacius bowed with seeming composure, and while each appeared to recover his moderation in a misty recollection of the true affair in hand, the dialogue between the Abbé and Father Siegfried, which had been drowned by the stentorian lungs of the principal disputants, broke out in the momentary pause.

"Thou sayest true, reverend father," said the former, "but were our fair and sprightly dames of France to perform these pilgrimages to distant shrines, of which thou speakest, rude treatment in the wayfaring, evil company, and, haply, designing confessors, might tarnish the present lustre of their graces, and leave them less ornaments to our brilliant and gallant court than they at present prove. No, I espouse no such dangerous opinions, but endeavor, by gentle persuasion and courtly arguments, to lead their precious souls nearer to the heaven they so well merit, and which it were scarce impious to say they will so rarely become."

"This may be well for the towering fancies of thy French imaginations, but our slower German minds must be dealt with differently. By the mass! I would give little for the success of the confessor that should deal only in persuasive and gentle discourse! Here, we throw our manifold hints of damnation in plainer speech."

"I condemn no usage on speculation, Benedictine; but truly this directness of condemnation would be thought indecorous in our more refined presences. As yet, thou wilt acknowledge, we are less tainted with heresies than thy northern courts."

Here the deep voice of Emich, who had recovered a little self-command, again drowned the by-play of the subordinates.

"We are not children, most reverend Bonifacius," he resumed, "to irritate ourselves with names. That I have been denied the honors and rights of my birth and line, for one come of no direct descent, is admitted; but let it be forgotten. Thou art welcome to my board, and there is no dignitary of the church, or of thy brotherhood, that I esteem more than thee and thine, within a hard ride of these towers. Let us be friends, holy Abbot, and drink to our loving graces."

"Count Emich, I pledge thee, and pray for thee, as thou meritest. If there have been misunderstandings between our convent and thy house, they have come of the misguiding of the Devil. We are a peaceful community, and one given more to prayer and a just hospitality than to any grasping desire to enrich our coffers."

"On these points we will not dwell, father, for it is not easy for baron and abbot, layman and priest, to see at all times with the same eyes. I would that this question of authority

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in Duerckheim were fairly disposed of, that there might always be good neighborhood in the valley. Our hills shut in no wide plain, like yon of the river, that we must needs turn the little level land we have into a battle-ground. By the mass! most holy Abbot, but thou wouldst do well to dismiss the Elector's troops, and trust this matter between us to gentle and friendly argument."

"If it were the last prayer I uttered before passing into the fruition of a self-denying and holy life, princely Emich, thy wish should not want support! Have we not often professed a willingness to refer the question to the Holy Father, or any other high church authority, that can fittingly take cognizance of so knotty a point. Less than this arbitration would scarce become our apostolic mission."

"God's truth! mein Herr Wilhelm, but ye are to grasping for those who mortify the flesh! Is it meet, I ask ye, that a goodly number of valiant and painstaking burghers should be led by shaven crowns in the day of strife, in fair and foul, evil and good, like so many worthless women, who, having lived in the idleness and vanities of gossip and backbiting, are fain to hope that their sex's sins may be hid beneath a monk's frock? Give me up, therefore, this question of Duerckheim, and certain other rights that might be fairly written out, and the saints in Paradise shall not live in more harmony than we of the Jaegerthal."

"Truly, Lord Emich, the means of fitting us for the heavenly state thou namest have not been forgotten, since thou hast made a purgatory of the valley these many years——"

"By the mass, priest, thou again pushest thy remarks beyond discreet speech! In what manner have I done aught to bring this scandal on the neighborhood, beyond a mere forethought to mine own interest. Hast thou not opened thy abbey-gates to receive armed and irreligious men?—are not thy ears hourly wounded by rude oaths, and thy eyes affronted by sights that should be thought unseemly in a sanctuary?—Nay, that thou mayest not suppose I am ignorant of thy hidden intentions, do not the armed bands of Duke Friedrich lie at watch, this very moment, within thy cloisters?"

"We have a just caution of our rights and of the church's honor," answered Bonifacius, who scarce endeavored to conceal the contemptuous smile the question excited.

"Believe me, Abbot of Limburg, so far from being the enemy of our holy religion, I am its sworn friend; else should I long since have joined the proselytes of this brother Luther, and have done thee harm openly."

"'Twere better than to pray at our altars by day, and to plot their fall at night."

"I swear by the life of the Emperor that thou urgest me too far, haughty priest!"

The clamor created by the Abbé and Father Siegfried here caused the two principal speakers to direct their attention, for the moment, to the secondary combatants. From a courtly dispute, the argument had got to be so confused and warm, between the latter, that each raised his voice in vain endeavor to drown that of his adversary. It was but an instant before the whirling senses of M. Latouche, who had only maintained his present place in the debauch by fraud, gave way to so rude an assault, and he staggered to a settee, where, gesticulating wildly, he soon sunk at his length, unable to lift his head. Father Siegfried witnessed the retreat of his mercurial foe with a grin of exultation; then he raised a ferocious shout, which, coming from lungs that had so lately chanted to the honor of God, caused the young Berchthold to shudder with horror. But the glazed eyes of the monk, and his failing countenance, betrayed an inability to endure more. After staring wildly about him, with the unmeaning idiocy of a drunkard, he settled himself in his chair, and closed his eyes in the heavy sleep that nature unwillingly furnishes to those who abuse her gifts.

The Abbot and the Count witnessed the manner in which their respective seconds were thus put *hors de combat*, in sullen silence. Their growing warmth, and the feelings excited by the mention of their several grievances, had insensibly drawn their attention from the progress of the contest, but each now regained a certain glimpse of its nature and of its results; the recollection served to recall the temper of both, for they were too well practised in these scenes not to understand the value of presence of mind in maintaining the command of their faculties.

"Our brother Siegfried hath yielded to the

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frailties of nature, noble Emich," resumed Boniface, smiling as placidly on his remaining companion, as flushed features and a heated eye would permit. "The flesh of priest can endure no more than that of layman, else would he have seen thy flasks drained of the last drop, for better intention never filled grateful heart, in doing honor to the gifts of Providence."

"Ay, thou passest thy debauches to the account of this subtilty, while we of the sword, Master Abbot, sin to-night, and ask forgiveness to-morrow, without other pretence than our pleasures. But the hood of a monk is a mask, and he who wears it thinks he hath a right to the benefit of the disguise. I would I knew, to a bodice, the number of burghers' wives thou hast shrived since Corpus Domini!"

"Jest not with the secrets of the confessional, Count Emich; the subject is too sacred for profane tongues. There has been bitter penance for greater than thou!"

"Nay, mistake me not, holy Abbot," returned the baron, hurriedly crossing himself; "but your bold talkers say there is discontent in Duerckheim on this point, and I deem it friendly to communicate the accusations of the enemy. This is a moment in which our German monks are in danger; for, in sooth, thy brother of Erfurt is no driveller in his cry against Rome."

The eye of Father Boniface flashed fire, for none are so quick to meet, or so violent to resent attacks, on what they consider their rights, as those who have long been permitted to enjoy monopolies, however frail or unjust may be the tenure of their possession.

"In thy heart, rude Emich, thou clingest to the heresy!" he said. "Beware, in what manner thou castest the weight of thy example and name into the scale against the commands of God and the authority of the Church! As for this Luther, a backsliding wretch, that unquiet ambition and love for a professed but misguided nun, have urged to rebellion, the devils are rejoicing in his iniquity, and imps of darkness stand ready to riot in his final and irretrievable fall."

"By the mass! Father, to a plain soldier it seemeth better to wive the sister honestly, than to give all this scandal in Duerckheim, and otherwise to do violence to the peace of families on the fair plains of the Palatinate. If Brother Luther hath done no more than thou sayest here, he hath fairly cheated Satan, which is what thy community did of old, when it got the evil spirit to aid in raising thy chapel, and then, with no great regard to a debtor's obligations, sent him away penniless."

"Were the truth known, Emich, I fear it would be found that thou hast faith in this silly legend!"

"If thou hast not outwitted the Devil, priest, it hath been that his prudence hath kept him from bargaining with those he knows to be his betters in cunning. By the rood! 'twas a bold spirit that would grapple, wit to wit, with the monks of Limburg!"

Disdain kept the Abbot from answering, for he was too superior to vulgar tradition to feel even resentment at an imputation of this kind. His host perceived that he was losing ground, and he began to see, by the manner in which his senses were slowly receding, that he was in imminent danger of forfeiting the important stake that now depended wholly on his powers of endurance. The Abbot had a well-earned reputation of having the strongest head of all the churchmen of the Palatinate, and Count Emich, who was nowise wanting in physical excellence of this sort, began to feel that species of failing which is commonly the forerunner, as it is often the cause, of defeat. He swallowed bumper after bumper, with a reckless desire to overwhelm his antagonist, without thought of the inroads that he was producing on his own faculties. Bonifacius, who saw and felt his superiority, willingly indulged his antagonist in this feverish desire to drive the struggle to a premature issue, and several glasses were taken in a sort of sullen defiance, without a syllable issuing from the lips of either. In this strait, the Count turned his swimming eyes toward the attendants, in a vague hope that they who served him so faithfully on ordinary occasions, might aid him in the present desperate emergency.

Young Berchthold Hintermayer stood near his lord, in respectful attendance on his pleasure, for habit prevented him from withdrawing without an order. Enough had fallen from the parties in this singular contest to let him into the secret of its object. He

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appeared to understand the appeal, and advanced to do the office of cup-bearer, a duty that in truth required some such interference, for he who should have discharged it had been too diligently imitating those at the board to be able any longer to acquit himself with propriety of his functions.

"If my Lord Abbot would but relieve the passing time," said Berchthold, as he poured out the wine, "by descanting more at large on this heresy, he might be the instrument of saving a doubting soul; I freely confess, that, for one, I find much reason to distrust the faith of my fathers."

This was attacking the Abbot on his weakest, not to say his only vulnerable, point.

"Thou shalt smart for this, bold boy!" he cried, striking the table with a clenched fist. "Thou harborest heresies, unfledged and paltry reasoner on apostolic missions! 'Tis well—'tis well—the impudent avowal is noted!"

Emich made a sign of gratitude, for in his rage the priest took a heavy draught, unconscious of what he was about.

"Nay, my lord, the most reverend Abbot will pardon imprudent speech in one little gifted in knowledge of this sort. Were it to strike a wild boar, or to stop a roebuck, or haply to do harm to my master's enemies, this hand might prove of some account; but is it matter of fair surprise that we of simple wit should be confounded, when the most learned of Germany are at a loss what to believe? I have heard it said, that Master Luther made noble answers in all the councils, and wise bodies, in which he hath of late appeared."

"He spoke with the tongue of Lucifer!" roared the Abbot, fairly frothing with the violence of ungovernable rage. "Whence cometh this new and late-discovered religion? Of what stock and root is it? Why hath it been so long hid, and where is its early history? Doth it mount to Peter and Paul, or is it the invention of modern arrogance and rank conceit?"

"Nay, father, the same might be asked of Rome itself, before Rome knew an apostle. The tree is not less a tree after it hath been trimmed of its decayed branches, though it may be more comely."

Father Bonifacius was both acute and learned, and, under ordinary circumstances, even the monk of Wittenberg might have found him a stubborn and subtle casuist; but in his actual condition, the most sophistical remark, if it had but the aspect of reason, was likely to inflame him. Thus assailed, therefore, he exhibited an awful picture of the ferocity of human passions when brutalized by indulgence. His eyes seemed starting from his head, his lips quivered, and his tongue refused its functions. He was now in the predicament in which the Count had so lately stood; and, though he foresaw the consequences, with the desperation of an inebriated man, he sought the renewal of his forces in the very agent which had undermined them. Count Emich himself was past intelligible utterance, but eloquence not being his strongest arm, he still maintained sufficient command of his physical powers to continue the conflict. He flourished his hand in defiance, and muttered words that seemed to breathe hatred and scorn. In this manner did a noble of an illustrious and princely house, and a mitred prelate of the Church, stand at bay, with little other consciousness of the existence of the nobler faculties of their being than that connected with the common mercenary object which had induced this trial of endurance.

"The Church's malediction on ye all!" Boniface at length succeeded in uttering:—then falling back in his elbowed and well-cushioned chair, he yielded his faculties to the sinister influence of the liquor he had swallowed.

When Emich of Leiningen witnessed the overthrow of his last antagonist, a gleam of intelligence and triumph shot from beneath his shaggy brows. By a desperate effort he raised himself, and stretching forth an arm, he gained possession of the deed by which the community of Limburg formally released its claims upon the products of the disputed vineyards. Arising, with the air of one accustomed to command even in his cups, he signed for his forester to approach, and aided by his young and nervous arm, he tottered from the room, leaving the banqueting-hall, like a deserted field, a revolting picture of human infirmity in its degradation and neglect.

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As the Count fell heavily upon his couch, clad as he had been at table, he shook the parchment toward his young attendant, till the folds rattled. Then closing his eyes, his deep and troubled breathing soon announced that the victor of this debauch lay like the vanquished, unconscious, feverish, and unmanned.

Thus terminated the well-known debauch of Hartenburg, a feat of physical endurance on the part of the stout baron who prevailed, that gained him little less renown among the boon companions of the Palatinate than he would have reaped from a victory in the field; and which, strange as it may now appear, derogated but little from any of the qualities of the vanquished.

CHAPTER VIII.

"And from the latticed gallery came a chant
Of psalms, most saint-like, most angelical,
Verse after verse sung out most holily."—ROGERS.

THE succeeding day was the Sabbath. The morning of the weekly festival was always announced to the peasants of the Jaegerthal with the usual summons to devotion. The matin bell had been heard on the Abbey walls, even before the light penetrated to the bottom of the deep vale; and all the pious had bent, in common, wherever the sounds happened to reach their ears, in praise and thanksgiving. But as the hours wore on, a more elevated display of Roman worship was prepared in the high mass, a ceremony addressed equally to the feelings and the senses.

The sun was fairly above the hills, and the season bland to seduction. The domestic cattle, relieved from their weekly toil, basked against the hill-side, ruminating in contentment, and filled with the quiet pleasures of their instinct. Children gambolled before the cottage doors; the husbandman loitered, in the habiliments that had borne the fashions of the Haart through many generations, regarding the silent growth of his crops, and the housewife hurried from place to place, in the excitement of simple domestic enjoyment. Tho month was the most grateful of the twelve, and well filled with hopes. The grass had reached its height, and was throwing out its exuberance, the corn was filling fast, and the vine began to give forth its clusters.

In the midst of this scene of rural tranquillity, the deep-toned bells of the Abbey called the flock to its usual fold. Long practice had made the brotherhood of Limburg expert in all the duties that were necessary to the earthly administration of their functions. Even the peals of the bells were regulated and skilful. Note mournfully succeeded note, and there was not a silent dell, for miles, into which the solemn call did not penetrate. Bells were heard too from Duerckheim, and even from the wide plains beyond; but none rose fuller upon the air, or came so sweet and melancholy to the ear, as those which hung in the Abbey towers.

Obedient to the summons, there was a gathering of all in the valley toward the gate of Limburg. A crowd appeared also in the direction of the gorge, for devotion, superstition, or curiosity never failed to attract a multitude on these occasions, to witness mass in that celebrated conventual chapel. Among the latter came equally the skeptical and the believing, the young and the old, the fair and her who deemed it prudent to shade a matronly countenance with the veil, the idle, the half-converted follower of Luther, and the lover of music. It was customary for one of the brothers to preach, when mass was ended; and Limburg had many monks that were skilled in the subtleties of the times, and some even who had names for eloquence.

With a management and coquetry that enter into most human devices that are intended to act on our feelings, especially in matters that it is not thought safe to confide too much to naked reason, the peals of the bells were continued long, with a view to effect. As group after group arrived, the court of the Abbey slowly filled, until there appeared a congregation sufficiently numerous to gratify the self-love of even a clerical star of our own times. There was much grave salutation among the different dignitaries that were here assembled, for of all those who doff the cap in courtesy, perhaps the German is the most punctilious and respectful. As the neighboring city was fully represented in this assembly of the religious and curious, there was also a profitable display of

the duties that are due to station. A herald might have obtained many useful hints, had he been there to note the different degrees of simple homage that were paid, from the Burgomaster to the Bailiff. Among the variety of idle and ill-digested remarks that are lavished on the American people and their institutions, it is a received pleasantry to joke on their attachment to official dignities. But he who has not only seen, but observed both his own countrymen and strangers, will have had numberless occasions to remark that this, like most similar strictures, is liable to the imputation of vapidity, and of being proof of a narrow observation. The functionary that is literally a servant of the people, whatever may be his dispositions, can never triumph over his masters; and, though it be an honest and commendable ambition to wish to be so distinguished, we need only examine the institutions to see that in this, as in most other similar circumstances, there is no strict analogy between ourselves and European nations. The remark has probably been made because a respect for official authority has been found among us, when there was the expectation, and possibly the wish, to find anarchy.

At the high mass of Limburg there was more ceremony observed in ushering the meanest village dignitary to his place in the church than would be observed in conducting the head of this great republic to the high station he occupies ; and care was had, by an agent of the convent, to see that no one should approach the altar of the Lord of the Universe without his receiving the deference he might claim in virtue of his temporal rank ! Here, where all appear in the temple as they must appear in their graves, equals in dependence on divine support as they are equals in frailty, it will not be easy to understand the hardihood of sophistry which thus teaches humility and penitence with the tongue, and invites to pride and presumption in the practice ; and which, when driven to a reason for its conduct, defends itself against the accusation of inconsistency by recriminating the charge of envy!

There had been a suitable display of ceremony when several functionaries of Duerckheim appeared, but the strongest manifestation of respect was reserved for a burgher who did not enter the gates until the people were assembled in the body of the church. This personage, a man whose hair was just beginning to be gray, and whose solid, vigorous frame denoted full health and an easy life, came in the saddle; for at the period of which we write, there was a bridle-path to the portal of Limburg. He was accompanied by a female, seemingly his spouse, who rode an ambling nag, bearing on the crupper a crone that clung to her well-formed waist, with easy, domestic familiarity, but like one unused to her seat. A fair-haired, rosy girl sat the pillion of the father, and a serving-man, in a species of official livery, closed the cavalcade.

Sundry of the more substantial citizens of Duerckheim hastened to the reception of this little party, for it was Heinrich Frey, with Meta, her mother, and Ilse, that came unexpectedly to the mass of Limburg. The affluent and flourishing citizen was ushered to the part of the church, or chapel, where especial chairs were reserved for such casual visits of the neighboring functionaries, or for any noble that devotion, or accident, might lead to worship at the Abbey's altars.

Heinrich Frey was a stout, hale, obstinate, sturdy burgher, in whom prosperity had a little cooled benevolence, but who, had he escaped the allurements of office and the recollection of his own success, might have passed through life as one that was wanting in neither modesty nor humanity. He was, in short, on a diminished scale, one of those examples of desertion from the ranks of mankind to the corps d'élite of the lucky, that we constantly witness among the worldly and fortunate. While a youth, he had been sufficiently considerate for the burdens and difficulties of the unhappy; but a marriage with a small heiress, and subsequent successes, had gradually brought him to a view of things that was more in unison with his own particular interests, than it was either philosophical or Christian-like. He was a firm believer in that dictum which says none but the wealthy have sufficient interest in society to be intrusted with its control, though his own instinct might have detected the sophistry, since he was daily vacillating between opposing principles, just as they happened to affect his own particular concerns. Hein-

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rich Frey gave freely to the mendicant, and to the industrious; but when it came to be a question of any serious melioration of the lot of either, he shook his head, in a manner to imply a mysterious political economy, and uttered shrewd remarks on the bases of society, and of things as they were established. In short, he lived in an age when Germany, and indeed all Christendom, was much agitated by a question that was likely to unsettle not only the religion of the day, but divers other vested interests; and he might have been termed the chief of the conservative party, in his own particular circle. These qualities, united to his own wealth; a reputation for high probity, which was founded on the belief that he was fully able to repair any pecuniary wrong he might happen to commit; a sturdy maintenance of his own opinions, that passed with the multitude for the consistency of rectitude; and a perfect fearlessness in deciding against all those who had not the means of disputing his decrees, had procured for him the honor of being the first Burgomaster of Duerckheim.

Were the countenance a certain index of the qualities of the mind, a physiognomist might have been at a loss to discover the motives which had induced Ulricka Hailtzinger, not only the fairest but the wealthiest maiden of the town, to unite herself in marriage with the man we have just delineated. A mild, melancholy blue eye, that retained its lustre in despite of forty years, a better outline of features than is common to the region in which she dwelt, and a symmetry of arm and bust that, on the other hand, is rather peculiar to the natives of Germany, still furnished sufficient evidence of the beauty for which she must have been distinguished in early life. In addition to these obvious and more vulgar attractions, the matronly partner of Heinrich had an expression of feminine delicacy and intelligence, of elevated views, and even of mysterious aspirations, which rendered her a woman that a nice observer of nature might have loved to study—and have studied to love.

In personal appearance, Meta was a copy of her mother, engrafted on the more ruddy health and less abstracted habits of the father. Her character will be sufficiently developed as we proceed in the tale. We commit Ilse to the reader's imagination, which will readily conceive the sort of attendant that has been introduced.

The Herr Heinrich did not take possession of his customary post before the high altar without causing the stir and excitement among the simple peasants of the Jaegerthal, and the truant Duerckheimers who were present, that became his condition in life. But even city importance cannot predominate forever in the house of God, and the bustle gradually subsiding, expectation began to take precedency of civic rank.

The Abbey of Limburg stood high among the religious communities of the Rhine, for its internal decorations, its wealth, and its hospitality. The chapel was justly deemed a rare specimen of monastic taste, nor was it wanting in most of those ornaments and decorations that render the superior buildings, devoted to the service of the Church of Rome, so imposing to the senses, and so pleasing to the admirers of solemn effect. The building was vast, and, as prevailed throughout that region and in the century of which we write, sombre. It had numerous altars, rich in marbles and pictures, each celebrated in the Palatinate for the kind mediation of the particular saint to whom it was dedicated, and each loaded with the votive offerings of the suppliant, or of the grateful. The walls and the nave were painted *al fresco*, not indeed with the pencil of Raphael, or Buonarotti, but creditably, and in a manner to heighten the beauty of the place. The choir was carved in high relief, after a fashion much esteemed, and that was admirably executed in the middle states of Europe, no less than in Italy, and whole flocks of cherubs were seen poising on the wing around the organ, the altar, and the tombs. The latter were numerous, and indicated, by their magnificence, that the bodies of those who had enjoyed the world's advantages slept within the hallowed precincts.

At length a door, communicating with the cloisters, opened, and the monks appeared, walking in procession. At their head came the Abbot, wearing his mitre, and adorned with the gorgeous robes of his ecclesiastical office. Two priests, decorated for the duties of the altar, followed, and then succeeded the professed and the assistants, in pairs. The

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whole procession swept through the aisles in stately silence; and, after making the tour of most of the church, paying homage and offering prayers at several of the most honored altars, it passed into the choir. Father Bonifacius was seated on his episcopal throne, and the rest of the brotherhood occupied the glossy stalls reserved for such occasions. During the march of the monks, the organ breathed a low accompaniment, and, as they became stationary, its last strain died in the vaulted roof. At this moment the clattering of horses' hoofs was audible without, causing the startled and uneasy priests to suspend the mass. The rattling of steel came next, and then the heavy tread of armed heels was heard on the pavement of the church itself.

Emich of Hartenburg came up the principal aisle, with the steady front of one confident of his power, and claiming deference. He was accompanied by his guests, the Knight of Rhodes and Monsieur Latouche, while young Berchthold Hintermayer kept at his elbow, like one accustomed to be in close attendance. A small train of unarmed dependents brought up the rear. There was a seat of honor, in the choir itself, and near the master altar, to which it was usual to admit princes and nobles of high consideration. Passing through the crowd that had collected at the railing of the choir, the Count inclined toward one of the lateral aisles, and was soon face to face with the Abbot. The latter arose, and slightly recognized the presence of his guest, while the whole brotherhood imitated his example, though with greater respect; for, as we have said, it was usual to pay this homage to worldly rank, even in the temple. Emich seated himself, with a scowl on his visage, while his two noble associates found seats of honor near. Berchthold stood at hand.

An inexperienced eye could have detected no outward signs of his recent defeat, in the exterior of Wilhelm of Venloo. His muscles had already regained their tone, and his entire countenance its usual expression of severe authority, a quality for which it was more remarkable than for any lines of mortification or of thought. He glanced at the victor, and then, by a secret sign, communicated with a lay brother. At this moment the mass commenced.

Of all the nations of Christendom, this, compared with its numbers, is the least connected with the Church of Rome. The peculiar religious origin of the people, their habits of examination and mental independence, and their prejudices (for the Protestant is no more free from this failing than the Catholic) are likely to keep them long separated from any policy, whether of Church or State, that exacts faith without investigation, or obedience without the right to remonstrance. An opinion is sedulously disseminated in the other hemisphere that busy agents are rapidly working changes in this respect, and a powerful party is anxiously anticipating great ecclesiastical and political results from the return of the American nation to the opinions of their ancestors of the middle ages. Were the fact so, it would give us little concern, for we do not believe salvation to be the peculiar province of sects; but, had we any apprehensions of the consequences of such a conversion, they would not be excited by the accidental accumulations of emigrants in towns, or on the public works in which the country is so actively engaged. We believe that where one native Protestant becomes a Catholic in America, ten emigrant Catholics drop quietly into the ranks of the prevailing sects; and, without at all agitating the point of which is the gainer or the loser by the change, we shall proceed to describe the manner of the mass, as a ceremony, that ninety-nine in a hundred of our readers have never had, nor probably ever will have, an opportunity of witnessing.

There is no appeal to the feelings of man which has given rise to opinions so decidedly at variance as those which are entertained of the Roman ritual. To one description of Christians these ceremonies appear to be vain mummeries, invented to delude, and practised for unjustifiable ends; while to another they contain all that is sublime and imposing in human worship. As is usual in most cases of extreme opinions, the truth would seem to lie between the two. The most zealous Catholic errs when he would maintain the infallibility of all who minister at the altar, or when he overlooks the slovenly and irreverent manner in which the most holy offices are so frequently performed; and, surely, the Protestant who quits the temple,

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in which justice has been done to the formula of this Church, without perceiving that there is deep and sublime devotion in its rites, has steeled his feelings against the admission of every sentiment in favor of a sect that he is willing to proscribe. We belong to neither class and shall, therefore, endeavor to represent things as they have been seen, not disguising or affecting a single emotion because our fathers happened to take refuge in this western world to set up altars of a different shade of faith.

The interior of the Abbey-church of Limburg, as has just been stated, was renowned in Germany for its magnificence. Its vaulted roof was supported by many massive pillars, and ornamented with scriptural stories, by the best pencils of that region. The grand altar was of marble, richly embellished with agate, containing as usual a labored representation of the blessed Mary and her deified child. A railing of exquisite workmanship, and richly gilded, excluded profane feet from this sanctified spot, which, in addition to its fixtures, was now glittering with vessels of gold and precious stones, being decorated for the approaching mass. The officiating priests wore vestments stiffened with golden embroidery, while the inferior attendants were as usual clad in white, and bound with scarfs of purple.

Upon this scene of gorgeous and elaborate splendor, in which the noble architecture united with the minute preparations of the service to lead the spirit to lofty contemplations, the chant of the monks, and the tones of the organ, broke in a deep and startling appeal to the soul. Lives dedicated to the practices of their community, had drilled the brotherhood into perfection, and scarce a note issued among the vaults that was not attuned to the desired effect. Trombones, serpents, and viols, lent their aid to increase the solemn melody of powerful masculine voices, which were so blended with the wind instruments as to comprise but one deep, grand, and grave sound of praise. Count Emich turned on his seat, clenching the handle of his sword, as if the clamor of the trumpet were in his ears; then his unquiet glance met that of the Abbot, and his chin fell upon a hand. As the service proceeded, the zeal of the brotherhood seemed to increase, and, as it was afterwards remarked, on no occasion had the mass of Limburg, at all times known for its power in music, been so remarkable for its strong and stirring influence. Voice rolled above voice, in a manner that must be heard to be understood, and there were moments when the tones of the instruments, full and united as they were, appeared drowned in the blending of a hundred human aspirations. From the deepest of one of these solemn peals there arose a strain, at whose first tone all other music was hushed. It was a single human voice, of that admixture of the male and female tones which seems nearest allied to the supernatural, being, in truth, a contralto of great compass, roundness, and sweetness. Count Emich started, for, when these heavenly strains broke upon his ear, they seemed to float in the vault above the choir; nor could he, as the singer was concealed, assure himself of the delusion, while the solo lasted. He dropped his sword, and gazed about him, for the first time that morning, with an expression of human charity. The lips of young Berchthold parted in admiration, and as he just then met the blue eye of Meta, there was an exchange of gentle feeling in that quiet and secret glance. In the meantime, the chant proceeded. The single unearthly voice that had so stirred the spirits of the listeners ceased, and a full chorus of the choir concluded the hymn.

The Count of Leiningen drew a breath so heavy that it was audible to Bonifacius. The latter suffered his countenance to unbend, and, as in the case of the youthful pair, the spirit of concord appeared to soothe the tempers of these fierce rivals. But here commenced the ritual of the mass. The rapid utterance of the officiating priest, gesticulations which lost their significance by being blended and indistinct, and prayers in a tongue that defeated their object by involving instead of rendering the medium of thought noble and clear, united to weaken the effect produced by the music. Worship lost its character of inspiration, by assuming that of business, neither attracting the imagination, influencing the feelings, nor yet sufficiently convincing the reason. Abandoning all these persuasive means, too much was left to the convictions of a naked and settled belief.

Emich of Hartenburg gradually resumed

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his repulsive mien, and the effect of all that he had so lately felt was lost in cold indifference to words that he did not comprehend. Even young Berchthold sought the eye of Meta less anxiously, and both the Knight of Rhodes and Monsieur Latouche gazed listlessly toward the throng grouped before the railing of the choir. In this manner did the service commence and terminate. There was another hymn, and a second exhibition of the power of music, though with an effect less marked than that which had been produced when the listeners were taken by surprise.

Against a column, near the centre of the church, was erected a pulpit. A monk rose from his stall, at the close of the worship, and, passing through the crowd, ascended its stairs like one about to preach. It was Father Johan, a brother known for the devotedness of his faith and the severity of his opinions. The low receding forehead, the quiet but glassy eye, and the fixedness of the inferior members of the face, might readily have persuaded a physiognomist that he beheld a heavy enthusiast. The language and opinions of the preacher did not deny the expectations excited by his exterior. He painted, in strong and ominous language, the dangers of the sinner, narrowed the fold of the saved within metaphysical and questionable limits, and made frequent appeals to the fears and to the less noble passions of his audience. While the greater number in the church kept aloof, listening indifferently, or gazing at the monuments and other rich decorations of the place, a knot of kindred spirits clustered around the pillar that supported the preacher's desk, deeply sympathizing in all his pictures of pain and desolation.

The sharp, angry, and denunciatory address of Father Johan was soon ended; and, as he re-entered the choir, the Abbot rose and retired to the cloisters, followed by most of the brotherhood. But neither the Count of Hartenburg, nor any of his train, seemed disposed to quit the church so soon. An air of expectation appeared, also, to detain most of those in the body of the building. A monk, toward whom many longing eyes had been cast, yielded to the general and touching appeal, and quitting his stall, one of high honor, he took the place just vacated by Father Johan.

The movement was no sooner made, than the name of Father Arnolph, the Prior, or the immediate spiritual governor of the community, was buzzed among the people, Emich arose, and, accompanied by his friends, took a station near the pulpit, while the dense mass of uplifted and interested faces, that filled the middle aisle, proclaimed the interest of the congregation. There was that in the countenance and air of Father Arnolph to justify this plain demonstration of sympathy. His eye was mild and benevolent, his forehead full, placid and even, and the whole character of his face was that of winning philanthropy. To the influence of this general and benevolent expression, must be added evident signs of discipline, much thought, and meek hope.

The spiritual part of such a man was not likely to belie the exterior. His doctrine, like that of the divine being he served, was charitable and full of love. Though he spoke of the terrors of judgment, it was with grief rather than with menace; and it was when dwelling on the persuasive and attractive character of faith, that he was most earnest and eloquent. Again Emich found his secret intentions shaken, and his frown relaxed to gleamings of sympathy and interest. The eye of the preacher met that of the stern baron, and, without making an alarming change of manner, he continued, as it were, by a natural course of thought—"Such is the Church in its purity, my hearers, let the errors, the passions, or the designs of man pervert it in what manner they may. The faith I preach is of God, and it partakes of the godlike qualities of His divine essence. He who would impute the sins of its mistaken performance to aught but His erring creatures, casts odium on that which is instituted for his own good; and he who would do violence to its altars, lifts a hand against a work of omnipotence!"

With these words in his ears, Emich of Hartenburg turned away, and passed musingly up the church.

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CHAPTER IX.

"Japhet, I cannot answer thee."—BYRON.

THE Abbey of Limburg owed its existence and its rich endowments chiefly to the favor of an emperor of Germany. In honor of this great patron, an especial altar, and a gorgeous and elaborate tomb, had been erected. Similar honors had been also paid to the Counts of Leiningen, and to certain other noble families of the vicinity. These several altars were in black marble, relieved by ornaments of white, and the tombs were decorated with such heraldic devices as marked the particular races of the different individuals. They stood apart from those already described in the principal church, in a sort of crypt, or semi-subterranean chapel, beneath the choir. Thither Count Emich held his way, when he quitted the column against which he had leaned while listening to the sermon of Father Arnolph.

The light of the upper church had that soft and melancholy tint which is so peculiar and so ornamental to a Gothic edifice. It entered through high, narrow windows of painted glass, coloring all within a hue that it was not difficult for the imagination to conceive had some secret connection with the holy character of the place. The depth and the secluded position of the chapel rendered this light still more gloomy and touching in the crypt. When the Count reached the pavement, he felt its influence deeply, for few descended into that solemn and hallowed vault without becoming sensible to the religious awe that reigned around. Emich crossed himself, and, as he passed before the altar reared by his race, he bent a knee to the mild and lovely female countenance that was there to represent the Mother of Christ. He thought himself alone, and he uttered a prayer; for, though Emich of Leiningen was a man that rarely communed seriously with God when exposed to worldly and deriding eyes, he had in his heart deep reverence for His power. As he arose, a movement at his elbow attracted a look aside.

"Ha! Thou here, Herr Prior!" he exclaimed, suppressing as much of his surprise as self-command enabled him to do with success; "thou art swift in thy passage from the stall to the pulpit, and swifter from the pulpit to the chapel!"

"We that are vowed to lives of monkish devotion, need to be often at all. Thou wert kneeling, Emich, before the altar of thy race?"

"By St. Benedict, thy patron! but thou hast, in good sooth, found me in some such act, holy father. A weakness came over me, on entering into this gloomy place, and I would fain do reverence to the spirits of those who have gone before me."

"Callest thou the desire to pray a weakness? At what shrine could one of thy name worship more fittingly than at this, which has been reared and enriched by the devout of his own kindred; or in what better mood canst thou look into thyself, and call upon divine aid, than in that thou hast mentioned?"

"Herr Prior, thou overlookest the occasion of my visit, which is to hear the Abbey mass, and not to confess and be shrived."

"It is long since thou hast had the benefit of these sacred offices, Emich!"

"Thou hast done well in thy way, father, at the desk; and I question not that the burghers of Duerckheim and their gossips will do thee credit in their private discourses. Thy fame as a preacher is not of mean degree even now, and this effort of to-day would well-nigh gain thee a bishopric, were the women of our valley in the way of moving Rome. How fareth it with the most holy Abbot this morning, and with those two pillars of the community, the Fathers Siegfried and Cuno?"

"Thou sawest them in their places at the most holy mass."

"'Fore heaven! but they are worthy companions! Believe me, father, more honest boon associates do not dwell in our merry Palatinate, nor men that I love in a better fashion, according to their merits! Did'st hear, reverend Prior, of their visit to Hartenburg, and of their deeds in the flesh?"

"The humor of thy mind is quickly changed, Herr Count, and pity 'tis 'twere thus. I came not here to listen to tales of excesses in thy hold, nor of any forgetfulness of those who, having sworn to better things, have betrayed that they are merely men".

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"Ay, and stout men, if any such dwell in the empire! I prize my good name as another, or I would tell thee the number of vessels that my keeper of the cellar sweareth are no better than so many men-at-arms fallen in a rally or an onset."

"This love of wine is the curse of our region and of the times. I would that none of the treacherous liquor should again enter the gates of Limburg!"

"God's justice! reverend Prior, thou wilt in sooth find some decrease of quantity in future," returned Emich, laughing, "for the disputed vineyards have at last found a single, and, though it might better come from thee, as one that hath often looked into my interior, as it were, by confession, a worthy master. I pledge thee the honor of a noble, that not a flask of that which thou so contemnest shall ever again do violence to thy taste."

The Count cast a triumphant glance at the monk, in the expectation, and possibly in the hope, that, notwithstanding his professions of moderation, some lurking signs of regret might betray themselves at this announcement of the convent's loss. But Father Arnolph was what he seemed, a man devoted to the holy office he had assumed, and one but little influenced by worldly interests.

"I understand thee, Emich," he said, mildly, but unmoved. "This scandal was not wanting at such a moment to bring obloquy upon a reverend and holy Church, against which its enemies have been permitted to make rude warfare, for reasons that are concealed in the inscrutable mysteries of Him who founded it."

"Thou speakest in reason, monk, for, to say truth, yon fellow of Saxony, and his followers, who are anything but few or weak, begin to move many in this quarter to doubts and disobedience. Thou must most stoutly hate this brother Luther in thy heart, father!"

For the first time that day, the countenance of the Prior lost its even expression of benevolence. But the change was so imperceptible to a vulgar eye, as to escape the scrutiny of the Count; and the feeling, a lingering remnant of humanity, was quickly mastered by one so accustomed to hold the passions in subjection.

"The name of the schismatic hath troubled me!" returned the Prior, smiling mournfully at the consciousness of his own weakness; "I hope it has not been with a feeling of personal dislike. He stands on a frightful precipice, and from my soul do I pray, that not only he, but all the deluded that follow in his dangerous track, may see their peril in time to retire unharmed!"

"Father, thou speakest like one that wisheth good to the Saxon rather than harm!"

"I think I may say, the words do not belie the thoughts."

"Nay, thou forgettest the damnable heresies he practiseth, and overlookest his motive! Surely one that can thus sell soul and body for love of a wanton nun, hath little claim to thy charity!"

There was a slight glow on the temples of Father Arnolph.

"They have attributed to him this craven passion," he answered, "and they have tried to prove, that a mean wish to partake of the pleasures of the world lies at the bottom of his rebellion; but I believe it not, and I say it not."

"God's truth! Thou art worthy of thy holy office, Herr Prior, and I honor thy moderation. Were there more like thee among us, we should have a better neighborhood, and less meddling with the concerns of others. With thee, I see myself no such necessity of his openly wiving the nun, for it is very possible to enjoy the gifts of life even under a cowl, should it be our fortune to wear it."

The monk made no answer, for he perceived he had to do with one unequal to understanding his own character.

"Of this we will say no more," he rejoined, after a brief and painful pause; "let us look rather to thine own welfare. It is said, Count Emich, that thou meditatest evil to this holy shrine; that ambition, and the longings of cupidity, have tempted thee to plot our abbey's fall, in order that none may stand between thine own baronial power and the throne of the Elector!"

"Thou art less unwilling to form unkind opinions of thy nearest neighbor, than of that mortal enemy of the Church, Luther, it would appear, Herr Prior. What hast thou

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seen in me, that can embolden one of thy charity to hazard this accusation?"

"I do but hazard what all in our convent think and dread. Hast thou reflected well, Emich, of this sacrilegious enterprise, and of what may be its fruits? Dost thou recall the objects for which these holy altars were reared, or the hand that laid the corner-stone of the edifice thou wouldst so profanely overthrow?"

"Look you, good Father Arnolph, there are two manners of viewing the erection of thy convent, and more especially of this identical church in which we stand. One of our traditions sayeth that the arch-knave himself had his trowel in thy masonry."

"Thou art of too high lineage, of blood too noble, and of intelligence too ripe, to credit the tale."

"These are points in which I pretend not to dip too deeply. I am no scholar of Prague or Wittenberg, that thou shouldst put these questions so closely to me. It were well that the brotherhood had bethought itself of this imputation in season, that the question might have been settled, for or against, as justice needed, when the learned and great among our fathers were met at Constance, in grave and general council."

Father Arnolph regarded his companion in serious concern. He too well knew the deplorable ignorance, and the consequent superstition, in which the great of his time were involved, to manifest surprise; but he also knew the power the other wielded sufficiently to foresee the evils of such a union between force and ignorance. Still it was not his present object to combat opinions that were only to be removed by time and study, if indeed they can ever be eradicated, when fairly rooted in the human mind. He pursued his immediate design, therefore, avoiding a discussion, which, at that moment, might prove worse than useless.

"That the finger of evil mingles more or less with all things that come of human agency, may be true," he continued, taking care that the expression of his eye should neither awaken the pride, nor arouse the obstinacy of the noble—"but when altars have been reared, and when the worship of the Most High God hath continued for ages, we have reason to hope that His Holy Spirit presideth in majesty and love around the shrines. Such hath been the case with Limburg, Count Emich; and doubt it not, we who stand here, holding this discourse, stand also in the immediate presence of that dread Being who created heaven and earth, who guideth our lives, and who will judge us in death!"

"God help us, Herr Prior! Thou hast already done thy office in the desk this day, and I see no occasion that thou shouldst doubly perform a function that was so well acquitted at first. I like not the manner of being ushered, as it were unannounced, into so dread a presence as this thou hast just proclaimed. Were it but the Elector Friedrich, Emich of Leiningen could not presume to this familiarity, without some consultation as to its fitness."

"In the eyes of the Being we mean, Electors and Emperors are equally indifferent. He loveth the meek, and the merciful, and the just, while he scourgeth them who deny His authority. But thou hast named thy feudal prince, and I will question thee in a manner suited to thy habits. Thou art, in truth, Emich of Leiningen, a noble of name in the Palatinate, and one known to be of long-established authority in these regions. Still art thou second, or even third, in worldly command, in this thy very country. The Elector and the Emperor both hold thee in check, and either is strong enough to destroy thee at pleasure, in thy vaunted hold of Hartenburg."

"To the last I yield the means, if thou wilt, worthy Prior"—interrupted the Count—"but for the first, he must needs dispose of his own pressing enemies, before he achieves this victory!"

Father Arnolph understood the other's meaning, for it was no secret that Friedrich was, just then, so pressed as to sit on a tottering throne; a circumstance that was known to have encouraged the long-meditated designs of the Count of Hartenburg to get rid of a community that thwarted his views, and diminished his local authority.

"Forgetting the Elector, we will turn only to the Emperor, then," rejoined the Prior. "Thou believest him to be in his palace, and remote from thy country, and certainly he hath here no visible force to restrain thy re-

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bellious hand. We will imagine that a family he protected—nay, that he loved—stood in the way of some of thy greedy projects, and that the tempter had persuaded thee it would be well to remove it, or to destroy it with the strong hand. Art thou weak enough, Count Emich, to listen to such advice, when thou knowest that the arm of Charles is long enough to reach from his distant Madrid to the most remote corner of Germany, and that his vengeance would be as sure as it would be fearful?"

"It would be a bold warfare, Herr Prior, that of Emich of Leiningen against Charles Quintus! Left to mine own humor, holy monk, I would rather choose another enemy."

"And yet thou wouldst war with one mightier than he! Thou raisest thy impotent arm, and thy audacious will, against thy God! Thou wouldst despise His promises, profane His altars, nay, thou wouldst fain throw down the tabernacle that He hath reared! Dost thou think that Omnipotence will be a nerveless witness of this sin; or that an eternal and benign wisdom will forget to punish?"

"By St. Paul! thou puttest the matter altogether in thine own interest, Father Arnolph, for there is yet no proof that this Abbey of Limburg hath any such origin, or, if it had, that it hath not fallen into disfavor, by the excesses of its own professed. 'Twere well to send for the right reverend Abbot, and those pillars of sanctity, the Fathers Cuno and Siegfried, to bear witness in thy behalf. God's wisdom! I reason better with those worthies, in such a matter, than with thee!"

Emich laughed, the sound echoing in that vaulted chapel to the ears of the monk, like the scoffing of a demon. Still, the natural equity of Father Arnolph told him that there was too much to justify the taunt of the noble, for he had long and bitterly mourned the depravity of many of the brotherhood.

"I am not here to sit in judgment on those who err, but to defend the shrines at which I worship, and to warn thee from a fatal sin. If thy hand is ever lifted against these walls, it is raised against that which God hath blessed, and which God will avenge. But thou art of human feeling, Emich of Hartenburg; and, though doubting of the sacred character of that which thou wouldst fain destroy, thou canst not deceive thyself concerning these tombs—in this holy chapel have prayers been often raised, and masses said, for the souls of thine own line!"

The Count of Leiningen looked steadily at the speaker. Father Arnolph had placed himself, without design, near the opening which communicated between that sombre chapel and the superior church. Rays of bright light shot through the eastern window, and fell upon the pavement at his feet, throwing around his form the mild and solemn lustre which comes from the stained glass of the Gothic ages. The services of the morning had also spread, throughout the entire building, that soothing atmosphere which is usually the attendant of Roman worship. The incense had penetrated to the crypt, and unconsciously the warlike noble had felt its influence quieting his nerves and lulling the passions. All who have entered the principal Basilica of modern Rome, have been subject to a combination of moral and physical causes that produce the result we mean, and which, though more striking in that vast and glorious pile, resembling a world with attributes and an atmosphere of its own, is also felt in every Catholic temple of consequence in a lessened degree.

"Here lie my fathers, Arnolph," answered the Count, huskily; "and here, as thou sayest, have masses been said for their souls!"

"And thou contemnest their graves—thou wouldst violate even their bones!"

"'Twere not an act for a Christian!"

"Look hither, Count. This is the monument of the good Emich, thy ancestor. He honored his God, and did not scruple to worship at our altars."

"Thou knowest, holy Prior, that I have often bared my soul at thy knees."

"Thou hast confessed, and hast been shrived; that thou didst not lay up future griefs——"

"Say rather damnation"—interrupted one behind, whose voice, issuing suddenly from that sepulchral chapel, seemed to come from the tombs themselves.—"Thou triflest, reverend Prior, with our holy mission, to deal thus tenderly with so sore a sinner."

The Count of Leiningen had started, and

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even quailed, at the first words of interruption; but looking around, he beheld the receding front, the sunken eye, and the bending person of Father Johan.

"Monks, I leave you," said Emich, firmly. "It is good for ye to pray, and to frequent these gloomy altars; but I, who am a soldier, cannot waste further time in your vaults. Herr Prior, farewell. Thou hast a guardian that will protect the good."

Before the Prior could recover his voice, for he too had been taken by surprise, the Count stalked, with a heavy footstep, up the marble stairs, and the tread of his armed heel was soon heard on the flags above.

CHAPTER X.

"The way is but short; away."—*Armado.*

While all must be conscious of the fearful infirmities that beset human nature, there are none so base as not to know that their being contains the seeds of that godlike principle which still likens them to their divine Creator. Virtue commands the respect of man, in whatever accidental stage of civilization, or of mental improvement, he may happen to exist; and he who practises its precepts is certain of the respect, though he may not always secure the protection, of his contemporaries.

As the Count of Leiningen walked down the rich and vast aisle of the Abbey-church, his thoughts vacillated between the impressions produced by the Prior, and his latent, but still predominant, intentions. He might have been likened to one who listened to the counsels of a good and of an evil genius; that exhorting to forbearance and mercy, and this tempting to violence by the usual array of flattery and hopes. While he brooded over the exactions of the community, which were founded on a legal superiority that was alike hurtful to his power and galling to his pride, its manner of thwarting his views, and its constant opposition to his supremacy in the valley, motives of enmity that were justly heightened by the dissolute and audacious deportment of too many of its members, the effect of all was secretly opposed by the image of Father Arnolph, surrounded by the mild and noble characteristics of Christian virtue. Emich could not, though he fain would, chase from his imagination the impression of meekness, charity, and of self-denial, that a long acquaintance with the monk had made, and which the recent interview had served both to freshen and to render more deep. But a spectacle was prepared to meet his eyes in the court of the convent, that did as much toward weakening this happy influence of the Prior, by setting the pride of the noble in opposition to his better feelings, as could have been wished by the bitterest enemy of Limburg.

It has been said that the outer wall of the Abbey encircled the entire brow of the hill, or mountain, on which the convent stood. Though the buildings were spacious and numerous, the size of the little plain on the summit left ample space for exercise and air. Besides the cloisters, which were vast, though possessing the character of monkish seclusion, there were gardens in the rear of the Abbot's abode, and a court of considerable extent, immediately in front of the church. Athwart this court, in which sundry groups of the late congregation yet lingered, was drawn up, in military order, a band of soldiers, wearing the colors, and acknowledging the authority, of the Elector Friedrich. The secret signal given by Father Bonifacius, when the Count entered the choir, had prepared this unwelcome sight for his neighbor.

While the men-at-arms leaned on their arquebuses, in grave attention to discipline, the Knight of Rhodes and the Abbé were occupied in paying their court to the fair wife of the Burgomaster of Duerckheim, and to her scarce fairer daughter. Young Berchthold stood aloof; watching the interview with feelings allied equally to envy and jealousy.

"A fair morning and a comfortable mass to you, high-born Emich!" cried the husband and father heartily, but lifting his cap, as the noble approached the spot where the burgher stood, waiting for this meeting ere he put foot into the stirrup; "I had thought the sight of your fathers' altar was like to cheat me of this honor, and to send me away without a word from your friendly and much-prized grace."

"Between thee and me, Heinrich, this slight could not happen," answered the Count, grasping the hand of the Burgomaster, which

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he squeezed with the cordiality and vigor of a soldier. "How fareth it with all in Duerckheim, that town of my affection, not to say of my right?"

"As you could wish, noble Count, and well-disposed to the house of Leiningen. In all that pertaineth to love of your name and race, we lack nothing."

"This is well, honest Heinrich; it may yet be better.—But thou wilt do me grace this summer morning?"

"Nay, it is for your grace to command in this particular, and for one like me to obey."

"Herr Heinrich, hast looked well at these knaves of Friedrich? Ha! are they not melancholy and ill-disposed at being cooped with Benedictines, when there are stirring times in the Palatinate, and when their master hath as much as he can do to hold his court in Heidelberg? Seest thou aught of this?"

Emich had dropped his voice, and the burgher was not a man to express more in answer than the circumstances actually required. He looked eloquently, however, and the exchange of glances between him and the Count betrayed the nature of the undertaking that connected the castle and the city.

"You spoke of commanding my duty, mein Herr Graf, and it is fitting I should know in what manner to do you pleasure."

"Nay, 'tis no pain-giving penance I ask. Turn my horse's head toward Hartenburg, and share of my poor fare, with a loving welcome, for an hour or so."

"I would it were within compass, my Lord Count," returned Heinrich, casting a doubting look toward Meta and his wife—"but these Sunday masses are matters in which the women love to deal; and from the first sound of the matin bell, till we shut the gates at even, I scarce call myself master of a thought."

"By the Virgin! 'Twould seem ill indeed, did not Hartenburg contain a roof to shelter all of thy name and love."

"There are noble gentlemen already on your hospitality, and I would not fain——"

"Name them not. This in the gay doublet, that weareth the white cross, is but a houseless Knight of Rhodes, one that wandereth like the dove from the ark, uncertain where to place his foot; and he of black vestments, an idle Abbé from among the French, who doth little else but prate with the women. Leave thy female gender in their hands, for they are much accustomed to these gallantries."

"Zum Henker! most nobly born eccellenz, I never doubted their handiness in all idlenesses, but my wife hath little humor for vain attentions of this nature, and not to conceal from my lord any of our humors, I will confess it is as little to my pleasure to witness so much ceremony with a woman. Were the well-born Ermengarde, your noble consort, in the castle, my female charge might be glad to pay their court to her, but in her absence I doubt that they will cause more encumbrance than they will afford satisfaction."

"Name it not, honest Heinrich, but leave the matter to me. As for these idlers, I will find them occupation when fairly out of the saddle; so will I not excuse the youngest of thy name."

The warm, frank manner of the noble prevailed, though the arrangement was not altogether agreeable to the Burgomaster; but in that age hospitality was always of so direct a character as seldom to admit of denial without sufficient excuse. Emich now paid his court to the females. Smoothing his moustache and beard, he saluted the cheeks of Ulricke, with affectionate freedom, and then, presuming on his years and rank, he pressed a kiss on the ruby lips of Meta. The girl blushed and laughed, and in her confusion courtesied, as if in acknowledgment of the grace from one of so high quality. Heinrich himself, though he so little liked the coquetry of the strangers, witnessed these liberties not only without alarm but with evident contentment.

"Many thanks, noble Emich, for this honor to my women," he cried, lifting his bonnet again. "Meta is not used to these compliments, and she scarce knoweth rightly how to acknowledge the grace, for to say truth, it is not often that her cheek feeleth the tickling of a beard. I am no saluter of her sex, and there are none in Duerckheim that may so presume."

"St. Denis defend me!" exclaimed the Abbé; "in what shameful negligence have we fallen!" saluting the mild Ulricke on the instant, and repeating the same ceremony with the daughter, so suddenly, as to leave

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none present time to recover from their surprise. "Sir Knight of Rhodes, we appear in this affair as but of indifferent breeding!"

"Hold, cousin of Viederbach," said Emich, laughing, while he placed a hand before his kinsman.—"We forget, all this time, that we are in the court of Limburg, and that salutations which savor so much of earth may scandalize the holy Benedictines. We will to horse, and keep our gallantries for a better season."

The forward, impatient movement of young Berchthold was self-checked, and, swallowing his discontent, he turned aside to conceal his vexation.

In the meantime, the whole party prepared to mount. Although repulsed in his effort to obtain a salute from the fair girl, who had so passively received these liberties from his kinsman and the Abbé, the Knight of Rhodes busied himself in assisting the damsel upon the crupper of her father's saddle. A similar office was performed for Ulricke by the Count of Leiningen himself, and then the noble threw his own booted and heavy leg across the large and strong-jointed warhorse that was pawing the pavement of the court. The others imitated his example, even to the mounted servitors, who were numerous; when, doing stately reverence to the large crucifix that stood before them, the whole cavalcade ambled from the court.

There were many curious spectators around the outer gate, among whom were sundry of the more humble dependants of Hartenburg, purposely collected there, by an order of their lord, in the event of any sudden violence arising from his visit to the Abbey, together with a crowd of mendicants.

"Alms, great Emich! Alms, worthy, and wealthy Burgomaster! God's blessing on you both, and holy St. Benedict heed ye in his prayers! We are a-hungered and a-cold, and we crave alms at your honorable hands!"

"Give the rogues a silver pence," said the Count to the purse-bearer, who rode in his train. "They have a starving look, in sooth. These godly Benedictines have, of late, been so busied between their garrison and their masses, that they have forgotten to feed the poor. Come nearer, friend; art thou of the Jaegerthal?"

"No, noble Count. I come from a pilgrimage to a distant shrine, but want and suffering have befallen me by the way."

"Hast pressed the monks for charity? or dost thou find them too much engaged in godliness to remember human suffering?"

"Great Count, they give freely; but where there are many mouths to feed, there needs be much gold. I say naught against the holy community of Limburg, which is godly in charity, as in grace."

"Give the knave a kreutzer," growled Heinrich Frey; "hast thou aught to show in the way of authority for undertaking this pilgrimage, and for assailing the Elector's subjects and servitors in a public horse-path?"

"Naught but this, illustrious Burgomaster,"—Heinrich wore his chain of office—"naught but the commands of my confessor, and this pass of our own chief men."

"Callest this naught? Thou speakest of a legal instrument of high quality, an' it were but a copy of silly rhymes! Hold! thou must not be led into temptation by too much want. Meta, wench, hast a kreutzer?"

"Here is a silver pence, that may better suit the pilgrim's necessities, father."

"God keep thee, child! Dost expect to escape want thyself, with such prodigality? But stay—there are many of them, and the piece justly distributed might do good. Come nearer, friends. Here is a silver zwanziger, which you will divide honestly into twenty parts, of which two are for the stranger, for to him are we most indebted by the commands of God, and one for each inhabitant of the valley, not forgetting the poor woman that, in your haste, and by reason of her years, you have prevented from drawing near. For this boon, I ask prayers of you in behalf of the Elector, the city of Duerckheim, and the family of Frey."

So saying, the Burgomaster pushed ahead, and was soon at the foot of the mountain of Limburg. The train of footmen, who had lingered to witness the largess of the magistrate, and who had considered the indifference of Emich as what was no more than natural in one placed by Providence in a situation so far removed from vulgar wants, was about to follow, when a lay-brother of the convent touched one of the party on

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the arm, signing for him to re-enter the court.

"Thou art needed further, friend," whispered the lay-brother. "Amuse thyself with these men-at-arms till they retire; then seek the cloisters."

A nod sufficed to tell the lay-brother that he was understood, and he immediately disappeared. The follower of Count Emich did as commanded, loitering in the court until the object of the Abbot was accomplished, that of exhibiting the protection of the Elector to his dangerous neighbor, and the arquebusiers marched to their quarters. The road was no sooner clear, than the peasant who had been detained proceeded to do as he had been ordered.

In each conventual edifice of the other hemisphere, there is an inner court surrounded by low and contemplative arcades called the cloisters. The term which is given to the seclusion of monastic life in general, and to the objects of the institution itself, in an architectural sense, is limited to the secluded and sombre piazzas just mentioned. When this part of the building is decorated, as often happens, with the elaborate ornaments of the Gothic style, it is not easy to conceive a situation more happily imagined for the purposes of reflection, self-examination, and religious calm. To us the cloisters have ever appeared pregnant with the poetry of monkish existence, and, Protestant as we are, we never yet entered one without feeling the influence of that holy and omnipotent power that is thought to be propitiated by conventual seclusion. In Italy, the land of vivid thought and of glorious realities, the pencils of the greatest masters have been put in requisition to give the cloisters a mild attraction, blended with lessons of instruction, that are in strict consonance with their uses. Here are found some of the finest remains of Raphael, of Domenichino, and of Andrea del Sarto; and the traveller now enters vaulted galleries, that the monk so long paced in religious hope or learned abstraction, to visit the most prized relics of art.

The dependant of Count Emich had no difficulty in finding his way to the place in question, for, as usual, there was a direct communication between the cloisters of Limburg and the church. By entering the latter and taking a lateral door, which was known to lead to the sacristy, he found himself beneath the arcades, in the midst of the touching seclusion described. Against the walls were tablets with Latin inscriptions, in honor of different brothers who had been distinguished by piety and knowledge; and here and there was visible, in ivory or stone, that constant monitor of Catholic worship, the crucifix.

The stranger paused, for a single monk paced the arcades, and his mien was not inviting for one who doubted of his reception. At least so thought the dependant of Emich, who might easily have mistaken the chastened expression of Father Arnolph's features, clouded as they now were with care, for severity.

"What wouldst thou?" demanded the Prior, when a turn brought him face to face with the intruder.

"Reverend monk, thy much-prized blessing."

"Kneel, and receive it, son. Thou art doubly blest; in seeking consolation from the Church, and in avoiding the fatal heresies of the times."

The Prior repeated the benediction, made the usual sign of grace, and motioned for the other to rise.

"Wouldst thou aught else?" he asked, observing that the peasant did not retire, as was usual for those who received this favor.

"Naught—unless yonder brother hath occasion for me."

The face of Siegfried was thrust through a door which led to the cells. The countenance of the Prior changed like that of one who had lost all confidence in the intentions of his companion, and he pursued his way along the arcade. The other glided past, and disappeared by the door whic hhe had been covertly invited to enter.

It has already been said that the Benedictine is an order of hospitality. A principal building of the hill was especially devoted to the comforts of the Abbot, and to those of the travellers it was always his duty, and in the case of Father Bonifacius scarcely less often his pleasure, to entertain. Here were seen some signs of the great wealth of the monastery, though it was wealth chastened by forms, and restricted by opinion; still

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there was little of self-denial, or indeed of any of that self-mortification which is commonly thought to be the inseparable attendant of the cell. The rooms were wainscoted with dark oak; emblems of religious faith, in costly materials, abounded; nor was there any want of velvet and other stuffs, all however of sober colors, though of intrinsic value. Father Siegfried ushered the peasant into one of the most comfortable of these rooms. It was the cabinet of the Abbot, who, having thrown aside the robes of office in which he so lately appeared in the choir, and ungirt and divested of all the churchly pomp in which he had just shown himself to the people, was now taking his ease, with the indolence of a student, and with some of the negligence of a debauchee.

"Here is the youth I have named to you, holy Abbot," said Father Siegfried, motioning his companion to advance.

Bonifacius laid down a parchment-covered and illuminated volume, one but lately issued from the press, rubbing his eyes like a man suddenly roused from a dreamy abstraction.

"Truly, Brother Siegfried, these knaves of Leipzig have done wonders with their art! Not a word can I find astray, or a thought concealed. God knows to what pass of information this excess of knowledge, so long sacred to the learned, may yet lead us! The office of a librarian will no longer be of rare advantages, or scarcely of repute."

"Have we not proofs of the evil in the growing infidelity and in the manifest insubordination of the times?"

"It were better for all their souls, and their present repose, that fewer did the thinking in this troublesome world.—Thou art named Johan, son?"

"Gottlob, most reverend Abbot, by your leave, and with the Church's favor."

"'Tis a pious appellation, and I trust thou dost not forget to obey the duty of which it should hourly remind thee."

"In that particular I can say that I praise God, father, for all the benefits I receive; and were they double what they are, I feel that within me which says I could go on rendering thanks forever, for gracious gifts."

The answer of Gottlob caused the Abbot to turn his head. After studying the demure expression of the young man's face intently, he continued—

"This is well; thou art a huntsman in Count Emich's household?"

"His cow-herd, holy Abbot, and a huntsman in the bargain; for a more scampering, self-losing, trouble-giving family is not to be found in the Palatinate, than this of mine!"

"I remember it was a cow-herd; thou dealt a little lightly with my brother Siegfried here, in pretending thou wert of Duerckheim, and not of the castle."

"To speak fairly to your reverence, there was some business between us; for be it known to you, holy Abbot, a cow-herd is made to suffer for all the frolics of his beasts, and so I preferred to do penance simply for my own backslidings, without white-washing the conscience of all Lord Emich's cattle in the bargain."

The Abbot turned again, and this time his look was still longer and more scrutinizing than before.

"Hast thou heard of Luther?"

"Does your reverence mean the drunken cobbler of Duerckheim?"

"I mean the monk of Wittenberg, knave: though, by St. Benedict! thou hast not unaptly named the rebel; for truly doth he cobble that would fain mend the offices or discipline of Holy Church! I ask if thou hast sullied thy understanding and weakened thy faith, by lending ear to this damnable heresy, that is abroad in our Germany?"

"St. Benedict and the blessed Maria keep your reverence in mind, according to your deserts! What hath a poor cow-herd to do with questions that trouble the souls of the learned, and cause even the peaceably disposed to become quarrelsome and warlike?"

"Thou hast received a schooling above thy fortune. Art of the Jaegerthal?"

"Born and nurtured, holy Abbot. We are of long standing in the valley, and few families are better known for skill in rearing beeves, or for dealing cunningly with a herd, than that of which I come humble and poor as I may seem to your reverence."

"I doubt but there is as much seeming as reality in this indifferent opinion of thyself. But thou hast had an explanation with Brother Siegfried, and we count on thy services. Thou knowest the power of the

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As the excited monk suited his words by corresponding energy of emphasis and tone, Emich recoiled a step, like one who distrusted a secret mine.—*The Heidenmauer.*

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Church, son, and canst not be ignorant of its disposition to deal mercifully with those that do it homage, nor of its displeasure when justly angered. We are disposed to deal in increased kindness with those who do not stray from the fold, at this moment when the Devils are abroad scattering the ignorant and helpless."

"Notwithstanding all you have said, most reverend Abbot, concerning the trifle I have gleaned in the way of education, I am too little taught to understand aught but plain speech. In the matter of a bargain it might be well to name the conditions clearly, lest a poor, but well-meaning, youth should happen to be damned, simply because he hath little knowledge of Latin, or cannot clearly understand what hath not been clearly said."

"I have no other meaning than that thy pious conduct will be remembered at the altar and the confessional; and that indulgences, and other lenities, will not be forgotten when there is question of thee."

"This is excellent, holy Abbot, for those that may profit by it—but, St. Benedict help us! of what account would it all be, were Lord Emich to threaten his people with the dungeon and stripes, should any dare to frequent the altars of Limburg, or otherwise to have dealings with the reverend brotherhood?"

"Dost think our prayers, or our authority, cannot penetrate the walls of Hartenburg?"

"Of that, most powerful Bonifacius, I say nothing, since I never have yet profited in the way you mean. The dungeon of Hartenburg and I are not strangers to each other; and, were I to speak my most intimate thoughts, it would be to say, that St. Benedict himself would find it no easy matter to open its doors, or to soften its pavements, so long as the Count was in an angry humor. Potztausend, holy Abbot! it is well to speak of miracles and of indulgences; but let him who imagines that either is about to make that damp and soul-chilling hole warm and pleasant, pass a night within its walls in November! He may enter with as much faith in the Abbey prayers as he will; but if he do not come forth with great dread of Lord Emich's displeasure, why, he is not flesh and blood, but a burning kiln in the form of mortality!"

Father Bonifacius saw that it was useless endeavoring to influence the mind of the cow-herd in the vulgar manner, and he had recourse to surer means. Motioning his companion to hand him a little casket, externally decorated with many of the visible signs of the Christian faith, he took out of it a purse, that wanted for neither size nor weight. The eyes of Gottlob glistened—had not the monks been much occupied in examining the gold, they might have suspected that the pleasure he betrayed was a little affected—and he manifested a strong disposition to know the contents of a bag that had so many outward signs of value.

"This will make peace and create faith between us," said the Abbot, handing a golden mark to Gottlob. "Here is that which the dullest comprehension can understand; and whose merits, I doubt not, will be sufficiently clear to one of thy ready wit."

"Your reverence does not over-value my means," answered the cow-herd, who pocketed the piece without further ceremony. "Were our good Mother of the Church to take this method of securing friends, she might laugh at all the Luthers between the Lake of Constance and the ocean, him of Wittenberg among the number: but, by some strange oversight, she has of late done more toward taking away the people's gold, than toward bestowing! I am rejoiced to find that the mistake is at last discovered; and chiefly am I glad, that one, poor and unworthy as I, has been among the first that she is pleased to make an instrument of her new intentions!"

The Abbot appeared at a loss to understand the character of his agent; but, being a worldly and selfish man himself, he counted rather loosely on the influence of a mediator whose potency is tacitly admitted by all of mercenary propensities. He resumed his seat, therefore, like one who saw little necessity for further concealment, and went directly to the true object of the interview.

"Thou hast something to communicate from the Castle of Hartenburg, good Gottlob?"

"If it be your reverence's pleasure to listen."

"Proceed.—Canst tell aught of the force Emich hath gathered in the hold?"

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"Mein Herr Abbot, it is no easy matter to count varlets that go staggering about, from the moment the sun touches your Abbey towers, to that in which he sets behind the Teufelstein."

"Hast thou not means of separating them in divisions, and of making the enumerations of each apart?"

"Holy Abbot, that experiment hath failed. I divided them into the drunk and the sober; but, for the life of me, I could never get them all to be long enough of the same mind, to hunt up those that were in garrets and cellars; for while this slept off his debauch, that swallowed cup after cup, in a manner to recruit the drunkards as fast as they lost. It were far easier to know the Emperor's policy, than to count Lord Emich's followers!"

"Still they are many."

"They are and they are not, as one happens to view soldiership. In the way of draining a butt, Duke Friedrich would find them a powerful corps, even in an attack against his Heidelberg tun; and yet I doubt whether he would think them of much account in the pressing warfare he wageth."

"Go to—thou art too indirect in thy answers for the duty thou hast undertaken. Return the gold if thou refusest the service."

"I pray thee, reverend Abbot, to remember the risks I have already run in this desperate undertaking, and to consider that the trifle you have so munificently bestowed, is already more than earned by the danger of my ears, to say nothing of great loss of reputation, and some pricking of conscience."

"This clown hath tampered with thee, Father Siegfried," said the Abbot, in a tone of reproach to the attending monk; "he even dares to make light of our presence and office!"

"We have the means of recalling him to his respect, as well as to a remembrance of his engagements."

"Thou sayest true: let the remedies be applied—but hold!"

During this brief colloquy between the Benedictines, Father Siegfried had touched a cord, and a lay-brother, of vigorous frame, showed himself. At a signal from the monk, he laid a hand on an arm of the unresisting Gottlob, and was about to lead him from the room when the last words of the Abbot, and another signal from Father Siegfried, caused him to pause.

Bonifacius leaned a cheek on his hand, and mused long on the policy of the step he was about to take. The relations between the Abbey and the Castle, to adopt diplomatic language, were precisely in that awkward state in which it was almost as hazardous to recede as to advance. To imprison a vassal of the Count of Hartenburg, might bring matters to an immediate issue; and yet, to permit him to quit the convent, was to deprive the brotherhood of the means of extracting the information it was so important to obtain, and to procure which had been the principal inducement of attending the debauch already described, at a moment when there was so little real amity between the revellers. The precaution of Emich had frustrated this well-laid scheme, and the result of the experiment had been too costly to admit of repetition. There was also hazard in permitting Gottlob to return to Hartenburg, for the expectations and hostile spirit of the Abbey had been so unadvisedly exposed to the hind, as to render it certain he would relate what had occurred. It was desirable, too, to maintain an appearance of confidence, although so little was felt; for the monk well knew, that next to friendship, its apparent existence was of account in preventing the usual expedients of open hostility. Agents were at Heidelberg, pressing the Elector on a point of the last concern to the welfare of the brotherhood; and it was particularly material that Emich should not be driven to any overt act before the result of this mission was known. In short, these two little powers were in a condition similar to that in which some greater communities have been known to exist, instinctively alive to the opposing character of their respective interests, and yet tampering with the denouement, because neither was yet prepared to proclaim all it wished, meditated, and hoped to be able to attain. In the meantime, there was an ostensible courtesy between the belligerent parties, occasionally obscured by bursts of natural feeling, which, in politics, the world calls bonhomie, but which would, perhaps, be better termed by the frank designation of artifice.

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The Abbot was so much accustomed to this sort of politic reflection, that all these considerations passed before his mind in less time than we have consumed in enumerating them. Still the pause was salutary; for, when he resumed the discourse, he spoke like one whose decision was supported by thought.

"Thou wilt tarry with us a little, Gottlob, for the good of thy soul," he said, making a sign that was understood by his inferiors.

"A thousand thanks, humane and godly Abbot. Next to the present good of my body, I look with most concern to the future condition of my poor soul; and there is great comfort and consolation in your gracious words. It is but the soul of a poor man; but, being my all, in the way of souls, it must needs be taken care of."

"The discipline we meditate will be healthful. Brothers, lead the penitent to his cell."

The singular indifference with which Gottlob heard his doom, might have given the Abbot motive for reflection, had he not been so much occupied by other thoughts. As it was, the hind accompanied the lay-brother without resistance, and indeed with the manner of one who appeared to think he was a gainer by this especial notice from the community of Limburg. So natural and easy was the air of Gottlob, as they took the direction of a gloomy corridor, that Father Siegfried began to believe he had employed an agent whose mind, shrewd and peculiar as it seemed at times, was in truth subject to moments of more than usual imbecility and dulness. He placed the cow-herd in a cell, pointed to a crucifix, its only article of furniture, and, without deeming it necessary even to secure the door, retired.

CHAPTER XI.

"The Lady Valera is come
To visit you."—*Coriolanus.*

A SHORT ride brought the cavalcade of Count Emich to the gates of Hartenburg. When all had alighted, and the guests, with the more regular inmates of the castle, were ushered into the hall, the lord of the hold again saluted Ulricke and her daughter. This freedom was the privilege of his rank, and of his character as host; and for its exercise, he once more received the grateful acknowledgments of Heinrich Frey. The females were then committed to the care of Gisela, the warder's daughter, who, in the absence of its more noble mistress, happened to be the presiding person of her sex in the place.

"Thou art thrice welcome, upright and loyal Heinrich!" exclaimed the Count, heartily, while he led the Burgomaster by the hand, into one of the rooms of honor.—"None know thy worth, and thy constancy to thy friends, better than the master of this poor castle; and none love thee better."

"Thanks, well-born Emich, and such duty as one of poor birth and breeding can and should pay to a noble so honored and prized. I am little used to courtesies, beyond those which we burghers give and take in the streets, and may not do myself full justice in the expression of reverence and respect, but I pray you, Herr Count, to take the desire for the performance."

"Were thou the Emperor's most favored chamberlain, thy speech could not do thee more credit. Though Duerckheim be not Madrid, it is a well-respected and courtly city, and none need envy the Roman, or the Parisian, that dwelleth there. Here is my kinsman of Viederbach, a knight that Providence hath cast a little loosely upon the world since the downfall of his Mediterranean island of Rhodes, and who hath travelled far and near, and he swears, daily, thy town has no parallel, for its dimensions."

"Considered as a mountain city of no great magnitude, meine Herren, we do not blush at the aspect of our ancient walls."

"Thou needest not, and thou must have noted that I spoke in reference to its size. Monsieur Latouche is a gentleman that cometh from the capital of King Francis itself; and no later than this morning, he remarked on the neatness and wealth and other matters of consideration, that make themselves apparent, even to the stranger, in thy well-governed and prosperous borough."

The Burgomaster acknowledged the compliment, by a profound inclination and a gratified eye, for no flattery is so palpable as not to meet a welcome with those who labor for public distinction; and Emich well knew,

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that the police and order of his city were weak spots in Heinrich Frey's humility.

"Lord Emich scarce does me justice," returned the pliant Abbé, "since I found many other causes of admiration. The deference that is paid to rank in thy populace, and the manner in which the convenience of the honorable is respected, are particularly worthy of commendation."

"The churchman is right, Lord Emich—for, of all the towns in Germany, I do not think it easy to find another in which the poor and base are so well taught to refrain from thrusting their importunities and disadvantages on the gentle, as in our Duerckheim. I think my lord the Count must have observed the strict severity and cautious justice of our rules in this particular."

"None know them better, nor does any heed them more. I cannot recall the moment, cousin Albrecht, when any unpleasant intrusion on my privileges hath ever occurred within its gates. But I keep you from refreshing yourselves, worthy friends. Give us leave a little;—we will seek you again, at your own convenience."

The Knight and the Abbé took this intimation of the desire of the Count to be alone with the Burgomaster in good part, and withdrew without unnecessary delay. When alone, Emich again took Heinrich Frey by the hand, and led him away into a part of the castle where none presumed to intrude without an especial errand. Here he entered one of those narrow rooms, which were devoted to secret uses, and which was well termed a closet, being in effect but little larger and scarcely better lighted than the straitened apartments to which we give the same appellation in these later times.

When fairly protected from observation, and removed beyond the danger of eavesdroppers and spies, the Count threw aside his cloak, unbuckled his sword-belt, and assumed the manner of one at his ease. The Burgomaster took a seat on a stool, in deference to his companion's rank; while the latter, without seeming sensible of the act, seated himself at his side, in the only chair that the closet contained. Whoever has had much intercourse with Asiatics, or with Mussulmans of the southern shore of the Mediterranean, must have frequently observed the silent, significant manner with which they regard each other, when disposed to court or to yield confidence; the eye gradually kindling, and the muscles of the mouth relaxing, until the feeling is fully betrayed in a smile. This is one of the means employed by men who dwell under despotic and dangerous governments, and where the social habits are much tinctured with violence and treachery, of assuring one another of secret faith and ready support. There is a sort of similar freemasonry in all conditions of life, in which frank and just institutions do not spread their mantle equally over the powerful and the weak, superseding, by the majesty of the law, the necessity of these furtive appeals to the pledges and sympathies of confidants. Such, in some degree, was the nature of the communication with which Emich of Hartenburg now commenced his private intercourse with Heinrich Frey. The Count first laid his square, bony hand on the knee of the Burgomaster, which he squeezed until the iron fingers were nearly buried in the fleshy protuberance. Each turned his head toward his companion, looking askance, as if they mutually understood the meaning of what was conveyed by this silent coquetry. Still, notwithstanding the apparent community of thought and confidence, the countenance and air of each was distinguished by the personal character and the social station of the individual. The eye of the Baron was both more decided, and more openly meaning, than that of the Burgomaster; while the smile of the latter appeared rather like a faint reflection of the inviting expression of the former, than the effect of any inward impulse.

"Hast heard of last night's success?" abruptly demanded the Count.

"Nothing of the sort hath gladdened me, Herr Count; my heart yearns to know all, if it touches your high interests."

"The mass-singing rogues are stripped of their wine-tribute! Of that much are they fairly and legally disburthened! Thou knowest of our long-intended trial of heads; I had intended to have prayed thee to be a second at the banquet, but the presence of these idlers put some restraint on my hospitality. Thou wouldest have proved a stanch second in such an onset, Heinrich!"

"I thank my lord the Count, and shall deem

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the grace as good as accomplished in the wish. I am not worse than another at board, and may boast of some endurance in the way of liquor, but the seriousness of the times admonishes us, of civic authority, to be prudent. There is a wish in the people to be admitted to certain unreasonable and grave privileges, such as the right of vending their wares in the market-place at unseasonable hours, when the convenience of the burgomasters would be much vexed by the concession; and other similar innovations, against which we must make a firm stand, lest they come, in time, to invade our general authority and cause an unnatural convulsion. Were we to give way to pretensions so extravagant, Herr Count, the town would come to general confusion; and the orderly and respectable city of Duerckheim would justly merit to be compared to the huts of those countries of which they speak in the distant land of America, that hath so much, of late, given cause to writings and conversation. We need, therefore, look to the example set; for we have busy enemies, who make the most of the smallest indulgences. At another time, I would gladly have drained Heidelberg to your gracious honor."

"Thou wouldest not have been in danger of observation here; and, by the three holy Kings of Koeln, I should know how to tutor any prying knave that might chance to thrust a curious eye within these walls! But thy discretion is worthy of thy prudence, Heinrich; for, with thee, I deem the time serious for all lovers of established order, and of the peace of mankind. What would the knaves, that they thus trouble thy authority? Are they not fed and clad? and do they not now possess privileges out of number? The greedy rogues, if left to their humors, would fain envy their betters each delicate morsel they carry to their mouths, or each drop of generous rhenish that moistens their lips!"

"I fear, well-born Emich, that this spirit of covetousness is in their vile natures! I have rarely consented to any little yielding to their entreaties, such as a wish to swell out the time of their merrymakings, or a desire like this of the market-place, that the taste of the indulgence hath not given a relish for fuller fare. No; he that would govern quietly, and at his own ease, must govern thoroughly; else shall we all become illiterate savages, fitter for the forests of the Indies, than for our present rational and charitable civilization."

"Braver words were never uttered in thy council-hall, and well do I know the head that conceived them! Had there been occasion to have summoned thee hither for the banquet, the excuse should have satisfied, though the vineyards were the forfeiture. But what didst think, friend Heinrich, of the priests to-day, and of their warlike company?"

"'Tis plain Duke Friedrich still upholds them; and to deal frankly with my lord the Count, the men-at-arms have the air of fellows that are not likely to yield the hill without fair contention."

"Thinkest thou thus, Burgomaster? 'Twere a thousand pities that men of tried mettle should do each other harm, for the benefits and pleasure of a community of shaven Benedictines! What is there to urge in favor of pretensions so audacious as these they prefer, and which are so offensive, both to me, as a noble of the empire, and to all of any note or possessions in Duerckheim?"

"They lay great stress, Herr Count, on the virtue of ancient usages, and on the sacred origin of their mission."

"As much respect as thou wilt for rights that are sealed by time, for such is the stamp that gives value to my own fair claims; and many of thy city privileges come chiefly of use. But the matter between us is of abuse; and I hold it to be unworthy of those who can right themselves, to submit to wrong. Do the monks still press the town for dues?"

"With offensive importunity. If matters be not quickly stayed, we shall come to open and indecent dissension."

"I would give a winter's enjoyment of my chases, were Friedrich more solely pressed!" exclaimed the Count, laying his hand again on the Burgomaster's knee, whose countenance he studied with a significance that was not lost on his companion. "I speak merely in the manner of his being driven to know his true and fast friends from those who are false."

Heinrich Frey remained silent.

"The Elector is a mild and loving prince,

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but one sorely ridden by Rome! I fear we shall never have a tranquil neighborhood, notwithstanding our long forbearance, until the Church is persuaded to limit its authority to its duties."

The eyelids of the Burgomaster lowered, as it might be in reflection.

"And chiefly, Heinrich, am I troubled lest my good and loving Duerckheimers lose this occasion to do themselves right," continued the Count, squeezing the knee he still grasped, until even the compact citizen flinched with the force of the pressure. "What say they in the council-hall touching this matter?"

There was no longer any plausible apology for the silence of the Burgomaster, who did not answer, however, without working the heavy muscles of his face, as if delivered of his opinions with pain.

"Men speak their minds among us, noble-born Count, much as Duke Friedrich prospers or fails, in his warfare. When we hear good tidings from the other side of the river, the brotherhood fares but badly in our discourses; but when the Elector's warriors triumph, we hold it prudent to remember they have friends."

"God's truth! Herr Heinrich, it is full time that you come to certain conclusions, else shall we be saddled to the end of our days by these hard-riding priests! Art thou not wearied with all their greedy exactions, that thou waitest patiently for more?"

"In that particular, a little sufficeth for our humors. There is not a city between Constance and Leyden, that is more quickly satisfied with paying than our Duerckheim; but we are husbands and fathers, Herr Count, and men that bear a heavy burthen of authority; and we must be wary, lest in throwing aside one portion of the load, space be found on our shoulders to place another that is heavier. When I would speak of your strong love to the town, there are distrustful tongues, that question me sorely of its fruits, and of your own honorable intentions in our behalf."

"To all of which thou couldest not be wanting of replies! Have I not often entertained thee with my loving wishes in behalf of the citizens?"

"If wishes in our behalf could serve our interests, the townsmen might, in their proper right, put in a claim to high favor. In the way of longing for our own success, Antwerp itself is not our better."

"Nay, thou takest my meaning unkindly; what Emich of Hartenburg wishes for his friends, he finds means to perform. But we will not trouble digestion, as we are about to feed, with these tiresome details——"

"I pray you, Herr Count, not to doubt my means—little troubles me, when——"

"Thou shalt yield to my humor. What! is not the Count of Leiningen master in his own castle? Not a word more will I hear till thou hast tasted of my poor hospitality. Did my knaves serve thee, as I commanded yesterday, with the fat buck that fell by my own hand, Heinrich?"

"A thousand thanks, mein Herr—they did, and right cheerfully. I gave the rogues a silver penny for their largess; and the dust of the Jaegerthal was washed away in heavy draughts of our wine of the plain."

"I would have it so; between friends, there should be no niggardly reserve, in the way of courtesies," said Emich, rising. "Dost not bethink thee, Burgomaster, of looking among the youths of Duerckheim for a son to stay thy age? Meta hath reached the years when maidens gladly become wives."

"The wench is not ignorant of her time of life, and the search of a suitable husband hath not failed to give me fatherly concern. I do not presume to compare our conditions and early lives in aught that is disrespectful, mein Herr Graf; but, touching all that is common to great and little, the youth of this day seem not as they were in the time of our young manhood."

"Priest-ridden, Burgomaster; too much of Rome in our laws and habits. God's my life! when I first mounted steed, in the court below, I could have leaped the convent towers, did a Benedictine dare gainsay the feat!"

"That would have been a miracle little short of the raising of their convent walls," answered Heinrich, laughing at his companion's flight, and rising in deference to the attitude the noble had been pleased to take. "These Benedictines have been careless of their advantages, else might they still have kept the circumstance of that miracle as

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much beyond dispute, as it was in our young days, Lord Count."

"And what say they in Duerckheim, now, touching the affair?"

"Nay, men treat it, at present, as they treat other disreputable subjects. Since this outcry of Brother Luther, there have appeared many who call in question not only that, but divers others of the Abbey's feats."

The Count unconsciously crossed himself, seeming to ponder gloomily on the subject, within his own mind. Then glancing toward his companion, he perceived that he was standing.

"I cry thy mercy, worthy Burgomaster; but my inattention hath given thee this pain. My leg hath been so much of late suspended in the stirrup, that it hath need of straightening; but it should not, in justice, cause thee this inconvenience. I pray thee, Herr Frey, be seated."

"That would ill become my station in your presence, noble and well-born Emich; nor would it do fit credit to my reverence and affection."

"Nay, I will hear none of this. Thy seat, Master Heinrich, and that without delay, lest I seem to overlook thy merits."

"I pray mein Herr Graf not to do himself this wrong; nay, if it be your honorable will —I blush at mine own daring—if I consent, I call my lord to witness 'tis only in profound respect for his will!"

During this struggle of courtesy, the Count succeeded, by means of gentle violence, in forcing the Burgomaster to resume his seat. Heinrich had yielded with a species of maiden coyness; but when he found that, instead of occupying his own humble stool, he had unwittingly been forced into the arm-chair of the noble, he rebounded from the cushion, as if the leather contained enough of the electric fluid to bid defiance to the non-conductor qualities of the ample woollen garment in which his nether person was cased.

"Gott bewahre!" exclaimed the Burgomaster, in harsh, energetic German: "The empire would cry out against this scandal, were it known! I owe it to my reputation to deny myself an honor so little deserved."

"And I to my authority to enforce my will, and to proclaim thy deserts."

Here the amiable force on the part of the Count, and the courteous coquetry of Heinrich Frey, were resumed, until the latter, fearful of offending by longer resistance, was obliged to submit, protesting, however, to the last, against the apparent presumption on his own part, and against the great injustice which the lord of the hold was doing to his own rights, by thus insisting.

A distinguished foreign orator once pronounced the titles of honor, and the social distinctions that are conferred by the European governments, to be the "cheap defence of nations." This opinion strikes us to be merely one of the thousand bold fallacies that have been broached to uphold existing interests, without reference to their true effects, or to their inherent justice. This "cheap defence," like the immortal Falstaff, who was not only witty himself, but the cause of wit in others, is the origin of a hundred sufficiently costly habits, that leave him who bears the burden but little reason to exult in its discovery. We recommend to all one-eyed economists, who still retain any faith in this well-known opinion of the English orator, to read that letter in the Spectator, in which a city youth relates the manner he is driven to vindicate his own reserve to his fair country cousins, who would fain reproach him with an ungrateful disrespect of his holiday privileges, by reminding them of the calculations of the individual who refused to indulge in cheesecakes, because they brought with them so many other unnecessary expenditures.

But whether honors of the description just alluded to, do or do not form any portion of the economy of a nation, there is little question but flattery, like this which Emich had just bestowed on the Burgomaster, is one of the subtle and most powerful agents of the great in effecting their secret purposes. Few are they—alas, how few!—that possess a vision sufficiently clear, and an ambition so truly noble, as to look beyond the narrow and vulgar barriers of human selfishness, and to regard truth as it came from God, without respect for persons and things, except as they are the instruments of His will. It is certain that Heinrich Frey had little pretension to be one of this scrutinizing and elevated class; for when he found himself fairly seated in the chair of the Count of Hartenburg, with the noble himself standing, his sensations were

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like those which are felt by the philosopher of the other hemisphere, who is authorized to put a ribbon at his button-hole;—or the tradesman of this, who is elected to the common-council of his native city, after being run on both tickets. Still he greatly regretted there was no one to envy his preferment; for, after the first soothing effect on his own self-love, that unquiet spirit which haunts us to the last, disfiguring the fairest pictures, and casting its alloy into every scheme of happiness, suggested that his triumph would be imperfect without a witness. Just as this rebellious feeling became troublesome, there appeared at the door of the closet, the very being of all others that the Burgomaster would have chosen to see him in the enjoyment of this high honor. A gentle tap announced the presence of the intruder, and when the authoritative voice of Emich had given the permission, the mild Ulrike appeared on the threshold.

Surprise was strongly painted on the features of the Burgomaster's wife. The husband had crossed his legs, and was indulging in his ease, with a sort of noble indifference to the unusual situation in which he was placed, when this extraordinary sight greeted the eyes of his amazed consort. So absolute and so tenacious were the rules of Germany on all things that concerned the respect due to rank, that even one as little troubled by ambition as the meek Ulrike, had great difficulty in believing her senses when she beheld Heinrich Frey thus suddenly elevated to a seat of honor in the presence of a Count of Leiningen.

"Nay, enter without fear, my good Ulrike," said Emich, graciously; "thy worthy husband and I do but indulge in mutual friendship, while my varlets prepare an unworthy banquet. Do not think to break our discourse."

"I only hesitate, noble Emich, at seeing Heinrich Frey preferred to that seat, while the Lord of Hartenburg stands, like one of humble birth, at his side!"

"Touch not the matter, meine Frau," said the husband, condescendingly. "Thou art a loving consort, and art well enough amid thy sex, and in questions that belong to thy breeding; but in an affair, like this, between mein Herr Graf and me, thou mayest only mar what thou canst not mend."

"By the life of the princely Karl! master Heinrich, you do insufficient justice to Ulrike's discernment! Were mine own Ermengarde among us, thou shouldst see that we prize thy loving wife little less than we esteem thee. But it were better that we inquire of Ulrike the occasion of her visit, before we attempt to school her on matters of deportment."

Though so rough and unnurtured on many of the points that are now deemed essential even to an indifferent civilization, Emich had a quick interest for the perception of character, and possessed as much of the refinement that marks a superior condition in life as the state of the age and the situation of his own country permitted. There can be no greater mistake than to imagine that mere nominal rank is any pledge for a correspondent degree of refinement, since everything is relative in this world, and where the base of the pillar is rude and little polished, it would be a violation of all architectural keeping to expect a capital of a different style. Thus it is that we, without any social orders but those of convention, are struck with so many glaring discrepancies among people whose patricians, having studied all that is factitious and plausible in breeding, are still deficient in the grand essentials of reason and humanity, simply because the roots of the society, of which they are only the more luxuriant branches, are planted in the soil of ignorance and debasement. The Count of Hartenburg had possessed ample opportunities of witnessing how much the intellectual qualities of the Burgomaster's wife were superior to those of her husband; and he had sufficient discrimination and experience to be quite aware of the importance of conciliating such an ally in advancing his own particular views. It was in this spirit, therefore, that he ventured on so blunt a reproof of Heinrich's superciliousness, and volunteered the compliment to the spouse; probably hazarding the latter from an intimate conviction that most husbands are content to hear eulogies on those who are so completely in their power as their own wives.

"Since it is your honorable pleasure, Herr Count, for God's sake let the woman come in," answered Heinrich, still, however, without changing an attitude so soothing to his self-esteem. "If she should see me seated

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in a presence in which it would much better become me to kneel, why it may help to show that God hath given her a companion that is not altogether without the world's esteem, little as he may merit it. Enter freely, therefore, good Ulrike, since it is my lord's pleasure; but presume not on his condescension to me, which is rather a mark of great love for our town, than any matter connected with domestic life."

"In all that the high-born Count hath done honor to any of us, whether as of Duerckheim, or as his unworthy neighbors, I desire respectfully to be grateful," returned the wife, who by this time had recovered from her surprise, and who now advanced farther into the narrow room, with the modest self-possession which ordinarily distinguished her manner:—"If I do not come amiss, I crave to be heard of both, in a matter that toucheth nearly a mother's heart; and a matter, as it is of Heinrich Frey's child I would fain speak, that I trust may not be indifferent to my lord the Count."

"Were it of mine own little Kunigunde, the subject should not be more welcome!" said the noble. "Speak freely then, gentle Ulrike, and with the same simplicity thou wouldest use were it only to thy husband's ear."

"Thou hearest, woman! mein Herr Graf enters, as it were, into all our tribulations and happiness, an' he were no other than a brother. So mince not the matter, but deal frankly with us; though I admonish thee not to push thy words to all the familiarity of household discourse."

"As it is of a subject so near, I pray leave to close the door, before more is uttered."

The words of Ulrike were cut short by a hasty gesture of approbation from her husband, and by the Count himself, who, with more of the consideration and manner of a gentleman, performed the desired office with his own hands, thus admitting the wife, as it were, into the very cabinet of their secret councils.

CHAPTER XII.

"You would be another Penelope: yet they
Say, all the yarn she spun, in Ulysses' absence, did
But fill Ithaca full of moths."—*Coriolanus.*

WHEN Ulrike found herself fairly closeted with the Count and her husband, and was quietly seated on the stool which the former, spite of the latter's protestations to the contrary, had insisted on her taking, she cast her mild eyes about her, with that expression and touching appeal that a woman is apt to make when she feels called on to act as the adviser, if not the guardian, of him whom nature intended, and the law presumes, is both able and willing to discharge those offices for her. Notwithstanding Heinrich's obstinacy and masculine swaggering, many occasions had arrived in the course of their matrimonial life to produce a latent conviction in both, that the order of things was a little inverted, as respects judgment and moral authority, by inclining one to lean, though with but an indifferent grace, where he should have supported; and tempting the other, at times, to overstep her sex's duties, though it was always done with an intuitive perception of her sex's seemliness and means.

"For this condescension I thank my Lord Emich, and thee, Heinrich," commenced the thoughtful matron; "for it is not at all times advisable for the wife to intrude unbidden even to her husband's presence."

A significant ejaculation, which might almost merit a coarser term, was the manner in which the Burgomaster expressed his assent, during the brief pause that succeeded this excuse of Ulrike. The more courteous host bowed with sufficient respect, though even by his manner it was evident he was getting impatient to know the real motive of the interruption.

"We are too well pleased to receive thee, to remember the usages and rights of manhood," answered the latter, with a kindness of that manner was insensibly extorted by the winning and feminine qualities of her he addressed, and which in some degree softened the pretensions of his language.—"Proceed with thy matter, for none can be more ready to listen."

"Thou hearest, good Ulrike! the Herr Count is willing to remember thou art a

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Burgomaster's consort; and, as he is pleased to say, we are truly impatient to be let into the cause of thy sudden visit."

The thoughtful Ulrike received this encouragement like one accustomed to be treated, in some measure, as a being inferior in capacity and force to her husband, but not without a shade like that which is produced by unmerited humiliation. Smiling—and few, even in early and attractive youth, had so sweet an expression, when her countenance thus gleamed, whether it were in pleasure, or in melancholy—smiling, as it might be, partly in female gentleness, and partly in sadness, she commenced the purport of her visit, coming, however, to her true object with great reserve and with the caution of a woman accustomed to influence, rather than to control.

"For the great kindness and condescension of the Herr Emich, in behalf of Heinrich Frey, and of all that are his, no one is more grateful than I," she said; "if I may now seem to trouble him with the concerns of a family on which he has already so freely lavished favors——"

"And friendship, good Ulrike."

"And friendship, since you permit me, noble Count, to use the word—but, if I now seem to trespass beyond breeding, by troubling your mind with a concern that is so remote from your own interests, I trust you will remember a mother's tenderness, and think of the high-born Ermengarde, whose anxiety for her own offspring may furnish some excuse for that I feel for mine."

"Hath aught befallen the blooming Meta?"

"God's my life!" exclaimed the troubled Heinrich, abandoning his much-prized seat, in the suddenness of paternal alarm. "Hath the wench suffered from the over-rich eels of the Rhine? or is she massed to death by these accursed monks?"

"Our child is well in the body, and, the blessed Maria be praised! she is pure and innocent in mind," returned Ulrike. "I have little cause for aught but gratitude in either of these behalfs;—but, she is of an age when girlish fancies become unsettled, and the flexible female spirit seeks impressions from others than those whom Nature hath made its guardians."

"This is some of thy usual incomprehensibilities, good woman, and language that is not easily understood by any but thyself. The noble Graf hath no leisure to hunt up new ideas to maintain a discourse in subtleties. Had the girl indeed tasted too freely of the rare dish which the honest Burgomaster of Manheim so kindly sent me, as I at first feared, no doubt the means to cure might be found in Hartenburg; but thou askest too much, wife of mine, when thou wouldest have any but thine own husband enter into all the cunning niceties that sometimes beset thy imagination."

"Nay, Master Heinrich, here may be more urgent matter than thou thinkest: thy dame is not a woman whose opinions are to be neglected. Wilt proceed with thy recital, good Ulrike?"

"Our child is at that period of life," continued the mother, too much accustomed to the manner of her husband to permit it to divert her thoughts from their main intention—"when the young of every sort begin to think of the future. It is a principle that God hath implanted, Herr Emich, and therefore it is for good; and we, who have watched over the infancy of our offspring with so much anxiety, have trained their youth with so much care, and have so often trembled for their noon-time, must, sooner or later, consent to loosen the sweet ties that bind us to our second selves, in order that the great ends of the creation shall be accomplished."

"Umph!" ejaculated Heinrich.

"Nay, gentle Ulrike," said the Count, "maternal love hath drawn this picture in stronger colors than may be necessary. When the time for matrimony comes, God's my life! daughter of thine and honest Heinrich Frey need not wear maiden's coif a day longer than is necessary to do suitable reverence to the Church. Here have I youths, out of number, that look to the house of Leiningen for grace, any one of whom would be glad to wive with the damsel I should name. There is young Friedrich Zantzinger, the orphan of my last deputy in the villages of the plain; he is a lad that would gladly do harder service to gain my love."

"When old Friedrich left the boy fatherless, he left him without a penny," dryly rejoined the Burgomaster.

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"That is a fault which might be mended; but I have others that can be named. What thinkest thou of the eldest son of my Heidelberg attorney, worthy Conrad Walther?"

"Curse the knave! I hate him from my heart."

"Thou art warm, Master Heinrich, against one that I both trust and favor."

"I cry your mercy, Herr Graf; but a sudden rising of the bile, at the mention of the fellow's name, got the better of respect," answered the Burgomaster, with more moderation, who, as he saw by the lowering look of Emich's brow the necessity of explanation, continued, with rather more openness than he might have thought necessary under circumstances of less urgency: "Perhaps the high-born Count was never possessed of the matter of our late controversy?"

"Nay, I pretend not to judge my friends ——"

"Let but my lord condescend to hear me, and I leave him arbiter between us. It is well known to you, Herr Emich, that collections were made, and charity asked, in behalf of the peasants who suffered, the past year, from the sudden rising of the Rhine. Among others, the good Christians of our town were importuned for succor; and, for none will deny that it was a sad visitation of Providence, we gave freely as became our several means. To prevent improper uses of the money, in all cases of liberal donations the sealed bond of the donor, at a near day, was asked in preference to the silver; and mine was granted for the fair sum of twelve crowns, as a poor donation suited to my hopes and station. It so fell out, Herr Graf, that those charged with the distribution had occasion for their money before the instruments were up; and they sent agents among us, in order to enter into such negotiations as the cases might need. Gold was scarce at the moment; and because, in regaining my bond, I had a heedful regard to mine own interests, the misdealing Conrad would fain transport me, like a thief, before the authorities of Heidelberg, to undergo the penalties of a usurer. Son of his shall never call me father, with your gracious leave, nobly-born Count of Leiningen!"

"This truly offereth some impediment to the affair; but, failing of young Conrad, I have others that may be accounted worthy of this advantage. So put thy maternal heart at ease, good Ulrike, and trust to my active friendship to dispose of the girl."

The Burgomaster's consort had been a patient listener during the short but characteristic digression of her husband. Trained in the opinions of the times, she did not possibly endure all that a mother and wife, of equal native sensibility, might now suffer at so evident a debasement of her sex; but as the laws of nature are permanent, neither did she escape a pang of wounded feeling as she heard the different expedients that were so hastily devised for the future disposal of one who formed her chief happiness in life. There was less of that hectic color, which commonly gave a lustre to eyes that were by nature rather melancholy than bright, and her voice was fuller of emotion than before, as she continued.

"For all this heed of me and mine, I again thank the Herr Count; but there is a power that is stronger with the young than the counsel of the experienced, or even than the wishes of their friends," she said. "My intent, in intruding myself unbidden into this secret conference, was to say that Meta had listened to the voice of her sympathies more than to the usages of her class, and chosen for herself."

The Count and Heinrich Frey stared at the speaker in mute surprise, for neither fully comprehended her meaning; while Ulrike herself, one of her objects being accomplished, in having made this long-dreaded declaration in the presence of a person able to repress the anger of her husband, sat silent, inwardly trembling for the consequences.

"Wilt thou explain the meaning of thy worthy consort, Herr Heinrich?" abruptly asked the Count.

"Zum Henker! you ask me to perform an office, Lord Count, that might better fit a Benedictine, or a clerk. When Ulrike, who is an excellent and obedient companion in the main, once gets upon the stilts of fancy, I never pretend to be able to raise an idea to the level of her shoe-buckle. Go to! thou hast well spoken, wife of mine; and it will now be better to seek our child, lest yonder cavalier of Rhodes be oiling her ears with the unction of flattery."

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"Nay, by my house's honors! but I will

know more of this matter, thy fair and virtuous consort consenting, Master Heinrich. Wilt explain thyself freely, dame?"

Whether it be from the instinct of weakness and delicacy, or only the fruit of precepts constantly inculcated, a virtuous woman rarely admits the existence of the sentiment of love, either in herself or in any that is dear to her, without a feeling of shame, and possibly not without an intuitive knowledge that she is conceding some of the vantage-ground of her sex's privileges.

This feeling was apparent in Ulrike, by the slow but complete suffusion of her cheek, and by the manner in which her looks avoided those of Emich, spite of the self-possession and calm of her years.

"I would merely say, Herr Emich," she replied, "that Meta, like all who are young and innocent, hath fancied an image of perfection, and that she hath found an original for her picture in a youth of the Jaegerthal. While of this mind she cannot, in honesty or in maidenly respect, become the bride of any other than him she loves."

"The affair grows clearer," returned the Count, smiling like one who took no very deep interest in the matter; "and it is as well explained as heart could wish—at least, heart of the youth in question. What thinkest thou of this, Herr Burgomaster?"

The comprehension of Heinrich Frey could not altogether misconceive so plain an explanation, and, since the moment when his wife had ceased speaking, he sat regarding her mild but troubled countenance, with parted lips and open eyes, like a man that first learns some unlooked-for intelligence of great moment.

"Herr Teufel! exclaimed Heinrich, taking up the last words of the Baron, unconscious of the disrespect of what he did—"Art talking of our own natural-born child?"

"Of none other. In whom else have I this motherly affection?—or for what other can I feel this deep concern?"

"Dost mean that Meta—my daughter, Meta Frey—hath inclination for son of woman, except it may be the natural love and reverence she beareth her own father?—that the girl hath truant and free fancies?"

"I say nothing to give this opinion of Meta—my daughter, Meta," returned Ulrike, with womanly dignity. "Our child has done no more than listened to the secret whisperings of Nature; and, in yielding her affections to a youth whom she hath often seen and long known, she hath merely paid an homage to merit, that the most virtuous are the most apt to yield."

"Go to, Ulrike! Thou art well enough among thy household, and a woman for whom I have esteem; but these visions with which thou art so often troubled, give thee an air, at times, of being of less discernment than thou mayest fairly claim to be. Excuse the dame, Herr Count; for, though her own husband, and a little weak on the subject of her infirmities perhaps, there is not a more thrifty manager, a more faithful spouse, or a kinder mother in the Palatinate."

"Nay, thou little need'st say this to me! None know the worth of Ulrike better; and, I may add, few respect her so much. It were well to hear further of this matter, Heinrich; for, to treat thee in candor, there may lie more beneath this opening of the excellent wife than is at first apparent. Our Meta hath seen the qualities of some worthy youth sooner than they have struck the eye of her quick-sighted father, thou wouldst say. Is it not so, dame?"

"I would say that the heart of my child is so closely bound in that of another, as to leave little hope of happiness should her matrimonial duties teach her to forget him."

"Thou thinkest, then, good dame, that the young fancies of a female, when once indulged, are not to be removed by the offices of wife and mother?—that a caprice of the imagination is stronger than a vow made at the altar?"

Though the eyes of both the Count and the Burgomaster were riveted on the fine and speaking countenance of Ulrike, the volume of eloquent nature, that was thus opened to their observation, proved little better than a blank. Strong and dramatic exhibitions of feeling require but little interpretation for the dullest faculties; but few indeed are they who are capable of comprehending the secret workings of a system chastened and restrained as that of a virtuous but unhappily-paired woman. There is, perhaps, no one aspect of human nature more commonplace, or more easily understood, than that

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which is hourly offered by a worldly-minded and capricious fair. She runs her little career, seemingly as erratic as a comet, though, in truth, her course is always to be calculated on the infallible principles of vanity and selfishness; but no secret is more hermetically sealed against impertinent and vulgar curiosity, than the elevated sentiments which sustain the suffering and silent female who is truly instinct with the high qualities of her sex.

We are no railer at the domination of man; for we are persuaded that he who would wish to transform the being that was created to be his solacer and companion—his guide in moral darkness, and his sharer in sorrow as in joy—into a worldly competitor, changing love and confidence to rivalry and contention, is but miserably instructed in that sublime ordinance of Nature, which has thus separated the highest order of its creation into two great classes, so replete with mutual consolation and happiness.

Had the wife of the Burgomaster arisen, and, in chosen terms, made an appeal to the sympathies of her companions, in which language should unite with manner to produce an effect, she might have been understood, as the every-day reader understands all such pictures of female character; but where she sat, silent, suffering, and meek, she was completely concealed from any means of comprehension possessed by either. Her eye did not kindle, for long and patient subordination had taught her to submit to the misconstructions of her husband; nor scarcely did the faint color of her cheek deepen, since the load at her heart counteracted the natural impulses of pride and resentment.

"I think, Lord Count, that when an innocent and youthful female heart yields to a power that Nature perhaps has made irresistible," she said, "it, at least, merits to be treated tenderly. Meta hath few fancies of the kind you mention; and the attachment she feels, though doubtless deepened by those colors which the least experienced in the truths of life are the most apt to paint, is but the natural consequence of much association, and of great deserving on the part of the young man."

"This is getting to be plain, Herr Emich," said Heinrich Frey, pithily, "and must needs be looked to. Wilt condescend to name the youth thou meanest, Ulrike?"

"Berchthold Hintermayer."

"Berchthold Teufelstein!" exclaimed the Burgomaster, laughing, though there was something like a secret consciousness of danger in the very manner in which he gave loose to his merriment. "A penniless boy is truly a fit husband for child of mine!"

The quiet, blue eye of Ulrike was fastened on her husband; but she averted it with sensitive haste, lest it might betray that she was thinking of the time when her own father had consented to her marriage with one nearly as poor, merely because the penetration of the parent had discovered those qualities of prudence and gainful industry in his townsman which after-experience so fully developed.

"He is not rich, Heinrich," was her answer; "but he is worthy; and why need a chill be thrown on the heart of Meta, for the desire of that which she already hath in sufficient plenty?"

"Hear you this, Herr Emich? My wife is lifting the curtain of privacy before your respected eyes with a freedom for which I could fain cry mercy."

"Berchthold is a youth I love," gravely observed the Count.

"In that case, I shall say nothing disrespectful of the lad, who is a worthy forester, and in all things suited to his service in the family of Hartenburg; still, he is but a forester, and a very penniless one. I had not thought to dispose of the girl so soon, for a little maidenly leisure does none of the sex injury, Lord Count; but as she hath her head set upon this Berchthold, it may be well to wrap it in a matron's coif, by way of filling it with ideas more suited to her hopes."

"The remedy may prove fatal, Heinrich!" mildly observed Ulrike, raising her tearful eye to the obstinate features of the Burgomaster.

"Nay, I ought to know the constitution of the family; what has so well succeeded with the mother cannot harm the child."

The wife did not reply. But Emich of Hartenburg had been deeply interested by her gentle and winning manner, for he had watched her countenance closely, and understood the womanly effort by which the ap-

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pearance of calm was preserved. Turning to the Burgomaster, he laid a hand on his shoulder, with a friendly smile, and said—

"Herr Heinrich, thou hast a fair and gentle consort; but, I think, too, thou hast scarce less faith in me than in thy wife. Give us leave; I would fain reason this matter with Ulrike, without the aid of thy influence."

"A thousand thanks for the honor to me and mine, high-born Count! As to faith, I would leave the dame a year on Limburg-hill without other thought than for her convenience; for none know the worth of Ulrike better, though she is so difficult to comprehend when her fancy is moulting. Now kiss me, dame, and prithee do no dishonor to the Count's counsel."

Thus saying, Heinrich Frey placed a hearty kiss on the soft cheek that the obedient Ulrike freely offered, and left his wife alone with the noble, without other thought than of the high distinction that was conferred on his name. The manner in which he prized the notice of the Baron was sufficiently manifested by the readiness with which he communicated the circumstance that Emich and his consort were closeted on an affair touching the interests of the family of Frey, to all who would listen to his tale.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Ah me! for aught that ever I could read,
Could ever hear by tales or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth!"
—SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN the door was closed on the husband, the Count turned to the wife, and continued the discourse.

"I love young Berchthold Hintermayer, good Ulrike," he said, "and would gladly be of aid in this affair, which, I see plainly, thou hast much at heart."

"The mother would be unnatural that had not anxiety for the happiness of her child. In youth, Lord Count, we gaze before us, filling the dim ascent with scenes drawn after our wishes, and peopling the world with the beings that we deem most necessary to our hopes; but when we have reached the eminence, whence the commencement and the end of life can both be plainly seen, do we first find truth. I am as little disposed as another to venture rashly on a union that has no better security for its fruits than a blind and feverish passion, that will be certain to consume itself by its own fierceness; but, on the other hand, none who have known life as I can be disposed to consider lightly those resemblances of taste and opinions, those gentle touches of character and disposition, that are most likely to conduce to wedded love."

"Thou art esteemed lucky in thine own consorting, dame?"

"God hath much blessed me in many mercies—the question is of Meta, my Lord Count."

Ulrike, spite of herself, had changed color; but, aided by the manner of matronly reserve she immediately assumed, the little emotion passed with Emich as no more than a display of feminine reserve, that was intended to repress a curiosity he had no title to indulge.

"The question is of Meta, in sooth," he answered; "and, by Saint Benedict! the youth shall not want for friendly and free support. But favor should have favor's reward. If I give into thy humor in this concern of thy daughter's marriage, good Ulrike, in return, I expect of thee a service on which I scarce lay less stress."

The matron raised her eyes to the countenance of her companion, in surprise. One who had not so uniformly preserved her own self-respect, might have doubted of what she heard; but the look of the Burgomaster's wife merely conveyed a meaning of curiosity and innocence.

"You will deserve far more than I can bestow, Herr Count, should you do aught to secure the happiness of Meta."

"Fair wife," continued Emich, seating himself, and taking her hand, with the freedom which his superior rank and the usages of the country allowed, "thou knowest the manner in which these Benedictines have so long vexed our valley; and, being so deeply in the confidence of the honest Heinrich, thou must have suspected that, wearied of their insolence and exactions, we have seriously bethought us of the means by which to reduce them to the modesty that becometh

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their godly professions, and which might better justify their pretensions?"

Emich paused, and sat intently regarding the face of his quiet listener. He had unwittingly touched upon the very subject that had been the chief inducement with the Burgomaster's wife for intruding upon the privacy of the conspirators. She had long suspected their intentions; and, though she felt deep care for the future lot of Meta, and had gladly availed herself of a favorable occasion to break the ice on a subject that, sooner or later, must be disclosed, her real object was to warn Heinrich against the probable consequences of the plot. In this disposition, then, she heard the Count with secret pleasure, and prepared herself to reply, in the manner she had long meditated.

"All that you say, Herr Count," she answered, "has more than once crossed my mind; and deeply have I grieved that those I so love and honor should thus meditate injury to the altars of God—plan desperate devices to interrupt His praise."

"How! dost thou call the whinings of these knaves praise of aught but their own hypocrisy?" interrupted Emich. "Are they not the instigators of most of our sins, by their example?—the parents of all the contention that troubles the neighborhood?—Consider, good Ulrike, that heaven is not a close into which souls are to be driven blindfolded; but that we, who are of the flock, have at least the right, as we have the means, of judging whether the shepherds are fit for their office or not."

"And should they prove unequal to, or unworthy of their duties, where do we find authority to do them harm?"

"God's my life! good wife, are our swords nothing? Are a noble name, an ancient and high descent, a long-standing claim to command, and a stout heart, nothing?"

"Arrayed against the Almighty, they count as the leaves of your own forest when fluttering in a gale;—less than the flakes of snow that drive, in winter, against the battlements of your strong castle. Limburg is reared in honor of God; and he that raiseth a hand against the sacred walls, will be apt to repent the rashness in woe. If there are unworthy ministers at its altars, there are also those that are worthy; and were it not so, the mission is too high to be sullied by any frailty of those who abuse their trusts."

The Count was disturbed; for Ulrike spoke earnestly, and in a voice of sweet persuasion. He leaned his chin upon a hand, as a man that pondered well upon the hazards of his enterprise.

"What thinkest thou, Ulrike, of this brother of Wittenberg?" he at length asked. "Could we but fairly make him out honest and wise, ecclesiastical authority for lowering the pride of Limburg might be had!"

"I am one of those who think Brother Luther honest; I am also one of those who think him mistaken: but even he is far from urging to deeds of violence."

"By Saint Benedict! woman, thou hast had converse with Father Arnolph, touching this question. Echo does not answer sound more faithfully than thou repeatest the sentiments of the Prior."

"It is not strange that they who love God should feel and speak alike in a matter affecting His honor. I have said naught to Father Arnolph, nor to any other of the Abbey, of your designs; for it is not easy for Ulrike Frey to forget she is both wife and mother. But I have prayed often, that the hearts of those who contemplate this dangerous sacrilege may be softened; and that, for their own safety, they may yet see the evil of their plot. Believe me, Count, the Dread Being who is worshipped in Limburg will not forget to avenge himself of those who despise His power!"

"Thou art certain, Ulrike, that thy opinions have weight with me, for since childhood have I known and respected thy wisdom. Nay, had there not been want of those claims which birth can alone give, thou wouldst now be sitting in this castle its mistress, and not a guest. The self-denial which was practised, in order to do my father pleasure, cost me much pain for many years; nor did I rightly regain my freedom, until the birth of my eldest born turned my hopes toward posterity."

It is seldom woman hears the acknowledgment of her influence with the stronger sex without secret satisfaction. As there had been nothing in the attachment to which the

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Count alluded, to alarm her principles or to offend her delicacy, Ulrike listened to this reference to the feelings and incidents of their younger days, with a smile that produced an effect on her gentle features, which resembled the melancholy light which illuminated the chapel of the religious community in question; or which was mild, placid, and, if we may be permitted an expression so vague, tinged with hues of the past.

"We are no longer young, Emich," she answered, withdrawing her hand, under a keen impulse of its propriety—"and that which thou speakest belongs to a former age. But if thou dost, in sooth, entertain this opinion of my discretion, I have never said aught of thee but in thy honor. There were other reasons than the late Count's will, why I could not listen to thy suit, as thou wert then informed; for we are none of us the controllers of those sentiments which so much depend on taste or accident."

"By the sainted eleven thousand of Koeln! Heinrich Frey was scarce a youth to do this disadvantage to the heir of my line and name!"

"Heinrich Frey received my troth, as the noble Ermengarde received thine, Herr von Hartenburg," answered Ulrike, with the composure of one whose feelings had never been interested in the refusal to which she alluded, and with the dignity of a woman sensitively alive to her husband's character. "By Heaven's favor, we are both happier than if wedded either above or beneath our hopes. But if thou couldst deny thyself this boon—for such, in thy young fancies, didst thou believe my hand—to oblige thy father of earth, wilt thou still defy him of Heaven, to gratify a longing less excusable?"

"Go to, Ulrike; thou pressest me out of reason; I know not fairly that I even meditate the enterprise thou meanest."

"Or, in other language, thou art not yet decided to commit the sacrilege. Before thy hand strikes the irretrievable blow, Herr Count, hear one that, in thy youth, thou professedst to love, and who yet remembers thy preference, with grateful kindness."

"Thou art more indulgent as a matron than as a maid! This is the first word of pity for all the sorrow thou causedst my youth, that hath ever escaped thee!"

"Pity is a term it would ill become Ulrike Haitzinger to use to Emich von Leiningen. I said gratitude, Herr Count; for the woman that pretendeth not to feel this sentiment toward the honorable youth that has preferred her to all others of her sex, payeth an indifferent compliment to her own heart. I never disavowed that thy suit gave me both gratification and sorrow—gratification, that one of thy hopes could find sufficient in me to justify thy choice; sorrow, that thou wert necessarily disappointed."

"And had our births been nearer an equality, gentle Ulrike, hadst thou, like me, come of noble parentage, or I, like thee, been of more humble origin, couldst thou, in sooth, have found in thy heart the excuse for a different answer?"

"We are here to discuss other matters, Herr von Hartenburg, than these recollections of childish feelings."

"God's my life! Callest thou the pain of disappointed affection a childish sorrow? Thou wert ever tranquil in temper, and too much disposed to indifference on the subject of any warmth of heart beyond the cold duties of family regard."

"This may be my fault, if you will, Count Emich, but I esteem it an advantage to feel strongest where duty most directs the affections."

"I remember thy final answer, made through thy friend young Berchthold's mother—I owe the lad no grace for the boon, were justice done—but thou answeredst, that the daughter of a Burgomaster was unfit to be the partner of a Baron; and thou prayedst me to render all duty to the Count my father, that his blessing might lighten the disappointment. Now, were the truth known, that reply cost thee no more than a simple refusal to one of thy maidens of some trifling grace!"

"Were the truth known, Emich, it would tell a different tale. Thou wert then young, and, though violent and hot-headed, not without many manly virtues; and thou greatly overratest the power of a thoughtful girl, if thou supposest she would gladly give pain, where she has received naught but esteem!"

"And had I been thy neighbor's child—or wert thou the daughter of some equal of the empire?—"

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"In that case, Lord Count, the answer would have been the same," said the other, firmly, though her countenance evidently lost its tranquil brightness in a transient cloud: "The heart of Ulrike Haitzinger spoke in that reply, as well as her prudence."

"God's truth! thou art of cutting simplicity!" cried the Count, rising abruptly, and losing the expression of gentleness that the recollection of his better days and youthful feelings had given his features, in their usual hardened character. "Thou forgettest, Frau Frey, that I am a poor Count of Leiningen!"

"If I have failed in meet respect," returned the mild Ulrike, "I am now reminded of the fault, and will sin no more."

"Nay, I would say naught unkind or ungentle—but thou bruisedst my spirit, with a sore answer. We were conversing of the accursed monks, too, and blood gets hot at the mention of their names. Thou thinkest, then, my excellent neighbor, that, as Christians, we are bound to submit to all the exactions of these reverend knaves, and that to presume to right ourselves, is flying in the face of Heaven's authority?"

"You put the case in your own humor, Count. I have said naught of abject forbearance, or of unnecessary submission. If the Limburg monks are forgetful of their vows, the question is of their own safety:—as for us, we have to look that we do nothing wrongful of itself, or nothing that may be accounted disrespectful to Him we worship——"

"Prithee, good Ulrike," interrupted Emich, resuming his seat, in the familiar manner he had used at the commencement of the dialogue, "let us converse, in freedom, of this inclination of thy child. I love young Berchthold, and would fain do him service were the means offering; but I greatly fear we shall have difficulty in bringing Heinrich to a complying state of mind."

"The apprehension of his refusal hath caused me much uneasiness, Herr von Hartenburg," returned the tender mother; "for the Burgomaster is not one of those who change their opinions readily. The overzealous persuasion of friends increases his faith in himself, at times, instead of softening those resolutions which the wisest of us are apt to form hastily and without thought."

"This quality of thy excellent consort hath not escaped me. But Heinrich Frey was wived so happily himself, and with so little claim to riches on his own part, that he should not, in reason, bear too heavily on a youth that might have known better days, but for a hard fortune befalling his parents. He that hath been poor, should have respect for poverty in others."

"I fear that such is not the working of human nature," answered the thoughtful wife, nearly unconscious of what she uttered. "Our experience in life would prove that they who have risen show the least tolerance for those who tarry in the rear; and, as none prize the gifts of rank and consequence so much as they to whom they are novelties, we ought not to expect the successful man too soon to forget the longings he felt when in adversity, nor him to whom honors are new, to look too closely into their vanity."

"Nay, Heinrich is not so young in consideration, or so new to fortune, as to be classed with these."

"Heinrich!" exclaimed the matron, across whose chaste brow there stole a crimson suffusion, that resembled the flush of even upon the snowy peaks of the Alps—"there is not question, here, of Heinrich Frey!"

The Count smiled till the mustachios curled upon his brown cheeks.

"Thou art right," he answered courteously; "it is in Berchthold and Meta that we are most interested. I think I see the means of accomplishing all we wish in their behalf, and means that offer so readily as to wear the air of being a gift of Providence."

"They are only the more welcome for their character."

"Thou knowest, Ulrike, that I am greatly burthened with charges that lie heavily on all of my rank. Ermengarde hath most of the qualities of her station, and a love of splendor that is costly; besides, this outfit of my young heir, who travels with the Emperor, hath much drained me of means, of late; else would I offer, of pure love for thee and thine, that which would make the connection acceptable to Heinrich. In this strait, borne down, as we all are, by the war, and saddled with the cost of keeping on foot so many men in Hartenburg, I see no other present means than that I have just mentioned."

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"Or have not mentioned; for, in the desire to prove your inability to serve the youth, nothing hath yet been said of this favorable chance offered by Providence."

"I cry thy mercy! Thou hast rightly judged me, Ulrike, for I feel it a reproach to be able to do nothing for one I so esteem."

"Put no undue meaning on my words," interrupted the matron, smiling like one who wished to reassure her companion. "It has never entered my thoughts that the Counts of Leiningen are bound to portion all who serve them, according to their several hopes. It would lighten the heaviest purse in the Palatinate, Herr Emich, to furnish an equal marriage-gift to that which may be the share of Meta Frey."

"None know this better than I. Heinrich and I have often discoursed of the affair, and I could fain wish there existed no inequality of rank—but this is idle, and we will talk only of Berchthold and his hopes. Thou art aware, Ulrike, that there are heavy issues between me and the brotherhood concerning certain dues, not only in the valley, but on the plain, and that the contest fairly settled in my favor will much increase my revenues. Now were this unhappy dissension decided as I could wish, it would not only be in my power, but it would become my wish, to bestow such grace on all my principal followers, and on none so much as on Berchthold, as might leave a favorable opinion of my bounty. We want but this affair rightly settled to possess the means of winning Heinrich to our desires."

"Could this be honestly done, my blessing on him that shall effect it!"

"I rejoice to hear thee say this, good Ulrike. Thou, of all others, mayest be most useful in the matter. Heinrich and I have well nigh decided on the fitness of disturbing the monks in their riotous abominations——"

"The words are strong, when applied to professed Benedictines!"

"By the holy Magi! they are more than merited. Here has not the day twice turned since I had Bonifacius himself weltering in wine beneath the roof of Hartenburg, an' he had been a roisterer of a suburb! Bonifacius, Limburg's Abbot, have I seen in this unfit condition, Frau Ulrike, within mine own good castle walls!"

"And in thine own good castle company, Herr Emich?"

"Dost thou make no difference between Baron and Monk? Am I a sworn professor of godliness, a shaven crown, or one that looketh to be accounted better than his fellows? That I am noble is the chance of fortune, and as such I receive and profit by the advantage, though, I trust, always in fitting reason; but no man can say that Emich of Leiningen pretends aught to the especial virtues of a monkish character. We that are modest may claim to indulge our failings, but justice should heavily visit him that sins under a cloak of sanctity."

"I know not that thy exception may avail thee in the end. But thou wouldest say something to Berchthold Hintermayer's advantage?"

"That would I, and right heartily. Could Heinrich be brought to a firm mind, that I might count on the support of the townsmen, these reprobates in cowls should be quickly disposed of; and as, of necessity, my dues would be much augmented, by clothing Berchthold with a deputy's authority over the recovered fields and villages, he should so gain in men's respect, as to soften the reluctance of the hardest-hearted Burgomaster in all Germany."

"And in what manner dost thou look to me in effecting this object?"

"One of thy understanding need scarce put the question. Thou hast been long a wife, Ulrike, and art skilled in the persuasions of thy sex. I know not thy practice with Heinrich; but when Ermengarde would have her way, spite of her husband's inclinations, she has various manners of coming to her wishes. To-day she is smiling, to-morrow silent; now she fondles, and then she frowns; and, most of all, is she ready in seizing the moments of idle confidence to press on my unprepared reason the arguments of kisses and coquetry."

"It were idle to say I do not understand you, Herr von Hartenburg. I wish not to raise the curtain of your domestic confidence, nor do I feel disposed that any should presume to lift mine. Heinrich and I pursue our several ways, as each deems right, though, I trust, always with the harmony of wedded interests, and I am little practised in the in-

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fluence you mention. But, dear as Meta is to the heart of her mother—and surely no shoot from the parent stem ever gave fonder hopes, or justified more tender regard"—Ulrike folded her hands, and turned her meek blue eyes to heaven—"much as I esteem young Berchthold, who is the child of my youth's nearest friend; and gladly as I would see their young hearts forever bound up in the same ties of family concord and matrimonial love, the common parents of lisping, laughing babes that should cluster at my knee, giving the evening of life some compensation for the chill of its noontide—rather than aid thee in this unhallowed design; rather than do aught, even in rebellious thought, against the altars of my God; rather than set my selfishness in array against His dread power, or fancy wish of mine can prove excuse for sacrilege—I could follow the girl to her grave, with a tearless eye, and place my own head by her side, without regret for that calm decline which, when the weary probation of life is ended, Heaven grants to the deserving."

The Count of Leiningen recoiled at the energy with which his companion spoke; for none are so commanding as the mild when aroused to resistance, or so authoritative as the good when required to exhibit the beauty of their principles. He was disappointed; but, though a sort of instinct warned him that he had no further hopes of gaining the assistance of Ulrike, and almost without knowing it himself, the respect which he had always entertained for his companion was increased. Taking the hand she extended to him, in amity, the moment her excitement had a little abated, he was about to reply, when a footstep in the adjoining room, and a timid tap at the door, interrupted him.

"Thou canst enter," said the Baron, believing that one of the castle maidens was without, and glad for the relief.

"A million of thanks for the honor," returned Ilse, courtesying to the floor as she availed herself of the privilege. "This is the first time so great a favor ever befell me in Hartenburg, though, when a girl, as it might be a ruddy maiden like our Meta, I once was admitted to a closet in Heidelberg. There was I, and the late Burgomaster, Ulrike's father, and the good wife, her mother, on a junketing, in our young days, to see the curiosities of the Elector's Palace, and we had visited the tun——"

"Thou art sent to seek me?" interrupted the mistress. "Hath Meta need of her mother?"

"That may be always said of a certainty, for girls of that age are like the young of the nest, Herr Count, who are ever in danger of breaking their necks, if they take a hasty flight, without the example of the old to give them prudence as well as courage. Twenty times each day—I know not an' if it be not fifty—do I say to our Meta, 'Do as thou wilt, child, an' thou dost nothing amiss.' I hold it to be wrongful to curb young humors so long as they are innocent; and therefore do I say, that kindness is a better rod than anger; and in this reproving and chastening manner, Herr von Hartenburg, have I reared both Meta and her mother. Well, here you both are, in friendly communion, an' you were children of the same cradle!—and Heinrich Frey is yon, without, tasting the rhenish with the two churchmen that infect the castle——"

"Thou wouldst surely say frequent, good nurse."

"What matters a word, child? Infect or frequent are much the same, when one speaketh of the gentle and gay! I remember ye both young and handsome, and a pair that the whole town of Duerckheim said ought never to be parted; for if one was noble, the other was good; if one was strong and valiant, the other was fair and virtuous; but the ways of the world led ye on different paths, and Heaven forbid that I should say aught against ways that so many travel!"

"And thou hast left Meta with those that infect the castle, to come and say this?"

"Naught like it. It is true I let the girl listen to a few of their idle words, for without experience a maiden may not know when to repulse an improper freedom; but for any levity to escape my eye, were as impossible as for my Lord Count to fail in duty to the Limburg altars. No, I complain not of the stranger nobles; for while he of Rhodes did many gentle offices in behalf of Meta, the reverend Abbé held me in discourse touching this heresy of Luther, and, I warrant you, ecclesiastic as he is, he went not away the worse for my opinion of the schismatic. We

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had goodly discourse on the dangers and tribulations of the times, and might have had much learning between us, but for young Berchthold, who fancied himself beating the forest, by the manner in which he threshed among the old armor of the hall, disturbing all present with the idle pretence of seeking a cross-bow for the Count's pleasure in the morning; as if the Herr Count would have hunted with less satisfaction because there were wise words uttered in his halls! The Hintermayers are a race I love, but this youth seemeth to be wanting of respect for years."

"And what hast done with my child?"

"Thou knowest it was thy desire she should say a few greetings to the fallen Lottchen; and when I thought the wandering cavalier had had his say, I beckoned the child away, in order that she might go to the hamlet on that errand. She will be none the worse for the discourse with that free cavalier, for naught so quickens virtue of the pure stamp as a little contamination with vice—it is like the base metal they put in gold, to make the precious ore hard and able to undergo many hands."

"Thou hast not suffered Meta to go unattended?"

"Didst ever know me to fail in duty? Thy motherly heart is quick to take alarm, like the bird fluttering at each leaf that rustles. Not I, in sooth; I sent the vain Gisela to keep her company, and whispered our Meta well, as they departed, not to fail to draw instructions from her companion's light discourse, which, I will warrant, turns on naught else but the gallantries of these strangers. Oh! leave old Ilse to profit by anything edifying that may turn up, in the way of accident! I that never yet lost a good moral for want of pushing an opportunity! and here stands Ulrike as proof of what I have done. I owe you excuses, Herr Emich, for sending away your forester; but the boy vexed me with his clatter among the shields and arquebuses, and, in order to give him a wholesome lesson in silence, I sent him to see Meta safe to his mother's door, under the pretence of its being necessary to have a manly arm present, to beat off the barking curs of the hamlet."

"Does Heinrich know this?"

"In sooth, he is so beset with thy honor in being closeted with my Lord the Count, that he does little besides talk of it, and take his cup. When the child was thus cared for, by the one who first held her in arms, and one, too, whose experience is little short of threescore and fourteen, I saw not the necessity of calling him from his pleasures."

Ulrike smiled, and turning to the Count, who had been so much lost in thought as to give little heed to the words of the nurse, she offered him her hand, and they left the closet in company.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Ah, now soft blushes tinge her cheeks,
And mantle on her neck of snow."—ROGERS.

THE cottage of Lottchen, the mother of Berchthold, was distinguished from the other habitations of the hamlet only by its greater neatness, and by that air of superior comfort which depends chiefly on taste and habit, and of which poverty itself can scarcely deprive those who have been educated in the usages and opinions of a higher caste. It stood a little apart from the general cluster of humble roofs; and, in addition to its other marks of superiority, it possessed the advantage of a small inclosure, by which it was partially removed from the publicity and noise that rob most of the villages and hamlets of Europe of a rural character.

We have had frequent occasions to allude to the difficulty of conveying accurate ideas of positive things, or even of moral and political truths, while using the terms which use has appropriated to the two hemispheres, but which are liable to so much qualification in their respective meanings. What is comfort in one country would be thought great discomfort in another, and even the two higher degrees of comparison must always be understood subject to right knowledge of their positive qualities. Thus most beautiful conveys nothing clear, unless we can agree on what is beautiful; while neatness and elegance, and even size, taken in their popular significations, become purely terms of local convention. Were we to say that the cottage of Lottchen Hintermayer resembled, in the least, one of those white and spotless dwellings, with its Venetian blinds and pil-

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lared piazzas, its grassy court in front, and its garden teeming with golden fruit in the rear, its acacias and willows shading the low roof, and its shrubbery exhaling the odors that a generous sun can extract, we should give such a picture to the reader as Europe nowhere presents—nowhere, because in those regions in which Nature has been bountiful, man has been held in mental duress; and in those in which man is sufficiently advanced and free to require the indulgences we have named, Nature denies the boons so necessary to their existence. Here, and here only, do those whom fortune has not smiled upon, possess the union of comfort, space, retirement and luxury, which depends on the causes named, for it is only here that are found the habits necessary to their production, in conjunction with the required climate and a cheapness of material and land, to place the whole within the reach of those who are not affluent. We wish, therefore, to be understood as speaking, at all times, under the consciousness of this difference in the value of terms, for, without such an understanding, there will be little intelligence between us and our countrymen.

We have made this explanation, lest the reader might fancy some affinity between the hamlet of Hartenburg and one in the older settlements of the Union. The remoteness of the period might indeed give some reason to suspect such a resemblance, but were the tale one of our own times, it would be scarcely probable. The Germans, like all the more northern nations, are neat, in proportion to their several degrees of civilization; and the great frequency of the little capitals which dot its surface, and which have all been, more or less, beautified by their respective princes, has caused it to possess a greater number of spacious and cleanly towns, in proportion to its population, than are to be met with in most of the other countries of the European continent; but, as elsewhere, in that quarter of the world, the poor are poor indeed.

The little cluster of houses that were grouped beneath the salient bastions of Hartenburg, had the general character of poverty and humility which still belongs to nearly all such hamlets. The buildings were constructed of timber and mud, with thatched roofs, and openings to which, in that age, glass was a stranger. In speaking of the comfort of the dwelling of Lottchen, we wish to say little more than that it was superior to its fellows in these particulars, and that it had the additional merit of faultless neatness. The furniture, however, gave much stronger evidence of the former condition of its tenant. Enough of this description of property had been saved from the wreck of her husband's fortunes, to leave before the eyes of its mistress these traces of happier days—one of those melancholy consolations in adversity which are common among those whose fall has been broken by some light circumstances of mitigation, and which, as monitors to delicacy and tenderness, make touching appeals to the recollections of the spectator. But Berchthold's mother had still better claims to the respect of those who came beneath her humble lintel. As we have already said, she had been the bosom friend of Ulrike in early youth, and, by education and character, she was still every way worthy of holding so near a trust with the wife of the Burgomaster. The allowance of her son was small in money, but the Count permitted his forester to use the game freely; and, as German frugality left her mistress of the wardrobes of several generations, the respectable matron had never known absolute want, and was at all times able to make such a personal appearance as better suited her former than her present means. In addition to these advantages, Ulrike never visited the Jaegerthal without thought of her friend's necessities; and full often, at times and seasons when this sacred duty could not be performed in person, was Ilse dispatched to the hamlet as the substitute of her considerate and affectionate mistress.

The cavalcade from the Abbey had, of necessity, passed the door of Lottchen, and she was fully aware of the intended visit. When, therefore, Meta, blooming and happy, entered the cottage, attended by the warder's daughter, and accompanied by Berchthold, though secretly rejoicing in what she saw, the pleased and watchful matron neither expressed nor felt surprise.

"Thy mother?" were the first words which passed the lips of the widowed Lottchen, after she had kissed the glowing and warm cheek of the girl.

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"Is closeted with the Herr Emich, my father says; else would she be sure to be here. She has sent me to say this."

"And thy father?" added Lottchen, with emphasis, glancing an uneasy eye from Meta to her son.

"He drinks of rhenish with the castle wassailers. Truly, my mother Lottchen, thou must find the hamlet unquiet with these graceless spirits in the hold. Our Limburg monks are scarcely so thirsty; and for idle discourse, I know not their equal in Duerckheim, town of vanities and folly though it be, as good Ilse is apt to say."

Lottchen smiled, for she saw by the playful eye of her young visitor, that nothing unpleasant had occurred; and giving Gisela welcome, she led the way within.

"Does Heinrich know of this visit?" asked the widow, when her young guests were seated, and with a painful interest in the answer.

"I tell thee, Lottchen, that my father quaffs with the strangers. Here is Berchthold thy son—the restless, impatient Berchthold—he can tell thee, mother, into what goodly company the Burgomaster of Duerckheim hath fallen!"

As Meta said this, she laughed, though, in very sooth, she scarce knew why. The more experienced Lottchen saw little else in the mirth of her young visitor than one of those buoyant impulses of youth which lead equally to gayety and sorrow, without sufficient cause; but she watched the countenance of her own child with solicitude, to note how far he sympathized with the merriment of Meta. Berchthold, by speaking, was the interpreter of his own thoughts.

"Since thou appealest to me," he said, "my answer is, that Heinrich Frey consorts at present with two as hopeless idlers as ever darkened door in Hartenburg. Truly, Brother Luther needs bestir himself for the Church, when such as these go forth in its garments!"

"Say what thou wilt, Master Berchthold," cried Gisela, "of the prating half-shaven Abbé, but respect him of Rhodes, as a soldier in evil fortune, and one that is both gentle and gallant."

"As gallant as thou wilt," cried Meta, with warmth. "Thy humor for mild discourse must be formed by the rude company of the bold, if thou stylest these gentle!"

Lottchen had examined each face earnestly, and her countenance brightened with the frankness and fervor of the last speaker. She was about to say something in guarded commendation of her judgment, when a light step was heard before the outer door, and Ulrike herself entered. Notwithstanding the early departure of the young people from the castle, and the trifling distance between its walls and the hamlet, so much leisure had been wasted in idle laughter by the way, or in culling flowers on the hill-side, that she had sufficient time to exhaust all that old Ilse had to recount concerning the manner in which she had disposed of her charge, and to follow them to the cottage, ere the discourse had gone farther. The meeting between the friends was, as wont, warm and happy. When the usual inquiries were exhausted, and a few unmeaning observations had been made by the girls, the younger part of the company were gotten rid of, under pretence of conducting Meta to witness the manner in which Berchthold had arranged the nests for some doves, which had been a present from herself to his mother. The two parents saw the departure of their children, always accompanied by Gisela, with satisfaction; for each had need of a secret conference with the other, and both knew how apt youth and inclination were to prolong their absence by means of those thousand little delays which form the unconscious and innocent coquetry of love.

When left to themselves, Ulrike and Lottchen sat, for some time, with hands interlocked, regarding one another earnestly.

"Thou hast borne the trying season of the spring-time well, good Lottchen," said the former, with affection. "I have no longer any fear that thy health might suffer in this damp abode."

"And thou lookest youthful and fair as when we strolled, like thy Meta there, laughing and thoughtless girls, on the heath of the Heidenmauer. Of all I have known, Ulrike, thou art the least changed by time, either in form or heart."

The gentle pressure, before they released each other's hands, was a silent pledge of their mutual esteem.

"Thou findest Meta blooming and happy?"

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"As she meriteth to be—and Berchthold—I think him fast growing into the comeliness and form of his sire."

"He is all I could wish—one qualification excepted, my friend; and that, thou well knowest, I do not wish him for any other reason than to satisfy Heinrich's scruples."

"For my child, that qualification is hopeless. Berchthold has too much generous indifference to gold, ever to accumulate, were the means his. But what hope is there for an humble forester, who travels his range of chase, follows his lord to ceremonies, or attends him in battle?"

"The Herr Emich values thy son, and I do think would fain do him favor. Were the Count earnestly to reason with Heinrich, all hope would not yet be lost."

Lottchen dropped her eyes to the work on which her needle was employed, for necessity had rendered her systematically industrious. The pause was long and thoughtful. But while Ulrike pondered on the chances of overcoming her husband's love of money and his worldly views, a very different picture had presented itself to the mind of her friend. The eyelids of the latter trembled, and a hot tear fell upon the linen in her lap.

"I have thought much of late, Ulrike," she said, "of the justice of burdening thy happiness and golden fortunes with the load of our adversity. Berchthold is young and brave, and there seems as little necessity as there is right in weighing thee and Meta down to our own level. I have anxiously wished for the means of counselling with some friend less interested than thou, on the fitness of what we do; but it is difficult to speak of so delicate a subject without wronging thy daughter."

"If thou wouldst have the most disinterested and wisest of all advisers, Lottchen, take counsel of thine own heart."

"That tells me to be just to thee and Meta."

"Dost thou know aught of Berchthold's manners or mind that may have escaped the observation of an anxious mother, who desires to match her own child with none but the deserving?"

Lottchen smiled through her tears, and gazed at the mild features of Ulrike with reverence.

"If thou wouldst hear evil of the youth, do not come to her who hath no other hope, for the tidings. The orphan is the sole riches of his widowed mother, and thou mayest not get the truth from one that regards her treasure with so much covetousness."

"And dost thou fancy, Lottchen, that thy son in poverty is dearer to thee than is Meta to her mother, though Providence may have left us wealth and consideration? Misfortune hath indeed changed thee, and thou art no longer the Lottchen of my young days!"

"I will say no more, Ulrike," answered the widow, in a low voice, speaking like one rebuked; "I leave all to Heaven and thee! Thou are certain that were Berchthold Count of Leiningen, his and my desire would be to see Meta his bride."

A nearly imperceptible smile played upon the sweet mouth of Ulrike, for she bethought her of the recent discourse with Emich; but there was neither suspicion nor discontent in the passing thought. She was too wise to put human nature to very severe tests, and much too meek to believe all who fell short of perfection unworthy of her esteem.

"We will think of things as they are," she answered, "and not dwell on impossible chances. Wert thou Ulrike and I Lottchen, none can believe more fervently than I, that these opinions would undergo no change. Of Meta thou art sure, my friend; but truth bids me say, that I fear Heinrich will never yield. His mind is much occupied with what the world deems its equality of interests; and it will be hard, indeed, to bring him to balance virtues against gold."

"And is he so wrong? Of what excellence is Berchthold possessed, that does not find at least its equal in Meta?"

"Happiness cannot be bartered for, as we would look into the value of houses and lands. He is wrong; and I could weep—oh, how bitterly I have wept!—that Heinrich Frey should be thus bent on casting the happiness of that artless and unpractised child on the rude chances of so narrow calculations. But we will still hope," added Ulrike, drying her tears, "and turn our thoughts to the more cheerful side."

"Thou saidst something of the power of

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my boy with the Count, and of his wish to do us service?"

"I know no other means to move Heinrich's mind. Though kind and yielding to me in all matters that he believes touch my state, he believes that no woman is a fit judge of the world's interests; and I fear I should add, that, from too much familiarity with my poor means, he places his wife lowest among her sex in this particular; there is no hope, therefore, that any words of mine can change him. But the Lord Emich has great hold on his judgment, for, Lottchen, they who prize the world's smiles ever yield reverence to those that chance to possess them largely."

The widow dropped her eyes, for, rarely, in their numerous and friendly conferences, did her friend allude to the weaknesses of her husband.

"And the Herr Emich?" she asked, desirous to change the discourse.

"The Count is much disposed to aid us, as I have said; for I have laid bare to him our wishes this morning, and have much entreated him to do this kind act."

"It is not wont for thee to be the solicitor with the Herr von Hartenburg, Ulrike!" rejoined Lottchen, raising her eyes again to the countenance of her friend, across whose cheek there passed a flush so faint as to resemble the reflection of some bright color of her attire, while a still less obvious smile dimpled the skin. The looks that were exchanged told of recollections that were both joyous and melancholy, being, as it were, hasty but comprehensive glances into the pregnant volume of the past.

"It was the first request," resumed Ulrike; "nor can I say the boon was absolutely refused, though its gift was coupled with a condition impossible to grant."

"If it were too much for thy friendship, it must have been hard indeed!"

Lottchen spoke under the influence of one of those sudden and keen impulses of disappointment which sometimes make the strong in principle momentarily forget their justice; and Ulrike perfectly understood the meaning of her words. The difference in their fortunes, the hopelessness of the future with the fallen Lottchen, and all the bitterness of unmerited contumely and poverty, the severe judgments which a thoughtless world inflicts on the unlucky, passed quickly through the mind of the latter, amid a tumult of regrets and recollections.

"Of this thou shalt judge for thyself, Lottchen," she answered calmly; "and when thou hast heard me, I require thy unconcealed reply, conjuring thee, by that long and constant friendship across which no cloud has ever yet passed, to lay bare thy soul, shading no thought, nor desiring to color even the most latent of thy wishes!"

"Thou hast only to speak!"

"Hast thou never suspected that all this warlike preparation in the hold, in the presence of the men-at-arms in Limburg, tends to no good?"

"Both speak of war; but the Elector is sore pressed, and it is now long since our Germany was at perfect peace."

"Nay, thy surmises must have gone beyond these general causes."

The look of surprise assured Ulrike she was mistaken.

"And Berchthold? Has he said naught of his lord's intentions?" continued the latter.

"He talks of battles and sieges, like most of his years, and he often essays the armor of his grandfather, which lumbers yon closet; for thou knowest, though not of knightly rank, we have had soldiers in our race."

"Is he not angered against Limburg?"

"He is, and yet is he not. There is a little flame of resentment, I regret to say, in all of the Jaegerthal against the monks, which is much fanned in my son by his foster-brother, Gottlob, the cow-herd."

"This flame hath descended to the hind from his lord. All that Gottlob says, Emich hath more than hinted."

"Nay, there was revelling in the hold, between Bonifacius and the Count, no later than the night past!"

"Too much blindness to that which passeth before thy eyes, dear Lottchen, is a virtuous failing of thy nature. The Count of Hartenburg plots the downfall of the Abbey-altars, and he has this day sworn to me, that if I will win Heinrich to his wishes, no influence or authority of his shall be wanting to make Berchthold and Meta happy."

Lottchen heard this announcement with

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the silent amazement with which the unsuspecting and meek first hearken to the bold designs of the ambitious and daring.

"This would be sacrilege!" she exclaimed with emphasis.

"'Twould be to disgrace the altars of God, that our desires might prevail."

There was a pause. Lottchen rose from her chair, with so little effort, that, to the imagination of her excited friend, it seemed her stature grew by supernatural means. Then raising her arms, the widowed mother poured out her feelings in words.

"Ulrike, thou knowest my heart," she said; "thou, who art the sister of my love, if not of my blood—thou, from whom no childish thought was hid, no maiden feeling concealed—thou, to whom my mind was but a mirror of thine own, reflecting every wish, all impulses, each desire—and well dost thou know how dear to me is Berchthold! Thou canst say, that when Heaven took his father, the yearnings of a mother alone tempted me to live; that for him, I have borne adversity with contentment, smiling when he smiled, and rejoicing when the buoyancy of youth made him rejoice; that as for him I have lived, so that for him would I die. Thou canst say, Ulrike, that my own youthful and virgin affections were not yielded with greater delight and confidence than I have witnessed this growing tenderness for Meta; and yet do I here declare, in the presence of God and His works, that before a rebel wish of mine shall aid Count Emich in this act, there is no earthly sorrow I will not welcome, no humility that I will dread!"

The pious Lottchen sank into her seat, pale, trembling, and exhausted with an effort so unusual. The widowed mother of Berchthold had never possessed the rare personal attractions of her friend, and those which were left by time had suffered cruel marks from sorrow and depression. Still, where she now sat, her face beaming with the inspiration of the reverence she felt for the Deity, and her soul charged to bursting, Ulrike thought she had never seen one more fair. Her own eyes brightened with delight, for at that moment of spiritual elevation, neither thought of any worldly interests; and her strongest wish was that the Count of Hartenburg could be a witness of this triumph of principle over selfishness. Her own refusal, though so similar in manner and words, the natural result of their great unity of character, seemed destitute of all merit; for what was the simple denial of one of her means, compared to this lofty readiness to encounter a contumely that was already so bitterly understood?

"I expected no less," answered Ulrike, when emotion permitted speech: "from thee, Lottchen, less would have been unworthy, and more could scarcely come! We will now speak of other things, and trust to the power of the dread Being whose majesty is menaced. Hast thou yet visited the Heidenmauer?"

Notwithstanding the excited state of her own feelings, which were, however, gradually subsiding to their usual calm, Lottchen took heed of the change of manner in her friend as she uttered the last words, and the slight tremor of the voice with which her question was put.

"The kindness of the anchorite to Berchthold, and his great reputation for sanctity, drew me thither. I found him of mild discourse, and a recluse of great wisdom."

"Didst note him well, Lottchen?"

"As the penitent regards him who offers consolation."

"I would thou hadst been more particular!"

The widow glanced toward her friend in surprise, but immediately turned her eyes, that were still filled with tears, to her work. There was a moment of musing and painful pause, for each felt the want of their usual and entire confidence.

"Dost thou distrust him, Ulrike?"

"Not as a penitent, or one willing to atone."

"Thou disapprovest of the deference he receives from the country round?".

"Of that thou mayest judge, Lottchen, when I tell thee that I suffer Meta to seek counsel from him."

Lottchen showed greater surprise, and the silence was longer than before, and still more embarrassing.

"It is long since thou hast named to me, good Lottchen, one that was so much and so warmly in our discourse when we were girls!"

The amazement of the listener was sudden and marked. She dropped her work, and clasped her hands together with force.

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"Dost thou believe this?" burst from her lips.

Ulrike bowed her head, apparently to examine the linen, though really unconscious of the act, while the hand she extended trembled violently.

"I have sometimes thought it," she answered, scarce speaking above a whisper.

A merry laugh, one of those joyous impulses which spring from the gayety of youth, was heard at the door, and Meta entered, followed by Berchthold and the warder's daughter. At this interruption the friends arose, and withdrew to an inner room.

CHAPTER XV.

"I pray thee, loving wife and gentle daughter,
Give even way unto my rough affairs."
—*King Henry IV.*

About an hour after the moment when Ulrike and Lottchen disappeared, as described in the close of the last chapter, the cavalcade of Heinrich Frey was seen moving along the Jaegerthal, beneath the hill of Limburg, on its way toward the town. Four light-armed followers of Emich accompanied the party, on foot, under the pretence of doing honor to the Burgomaster, but in truth to protect him against insult from any stragglers belonging to the men-at-arms who lay in the Abbey—a precaution that was not altogether without utility, as the reader will remember that the path ran within call of the ecclesiastical edifices.

As the beasts ambled past the imposing towers and wide roofs, that were visible even to those who journeyed in that deep glen, Heinrich's countenance, which had been more than usually thoughtful ever since he passed beneath the gate of Hartenburg, grew graver; and Meta, who rode as usual at his crupper, heard him draw one of those heavy respirations which were so many infallible signs that the mental part of her worthy parent was undergoing extraordinary exercises.

Nor did this shade appear only on the face of the Burgomaster. A deep and thoughtful gloom clouded the fine features of his wife, while the countenance of the blooming daughter betrayed that sort of sombre rest which is apt to succeed high excitement; a moment in which the mind appears employed in examining the past, as if disposed to dissect the merits and demerits of its recent enjoyments. Of them all, the male attendants alone excepted, old Ilse returned as she had gone, self-satisfied, unmoved, and talkative.

"Count Emich hath displeased thee, father," Meta said, quickly, when a respiration, which in one less physical would have been termed a sigh, gave her reason to think the Burgomaster's bosom was struggling with some bitter vexation; "else wouldst thou be more cheerful, and better disposed to give me thy parental counsel, as is thy habit when we go together on the pillion."

"The occasion shall not fail, girl; and these Abbey-walls offer in good time to prick my fatherly memory. But thou art in error if thou thinkest that the souls of the Herr Emich and mine are not bound together like those of David and Jonathan. I know not the man I more love, or, the Emperor and Elector apart, as is my duty, the noble I so much respect."

"It is well it is so, for I greatly value these airy rides among the hills, and most of all do I prize a visit to the cottage of Lottchen!"

Heinrich ejaculated audibly. Then, riding a short distance in silence, he continued the dialogue.

"Meta," he said, "thou art now getting to be of a womanish age, and it is time to fortify thy young mind in a manner that it may meet the cunning and malice of the world. Life is of great precariousness, especially to the valiant and enterprising, and we live in perilous times. He that is in his prime to-day, honored and of credit, may be cut down to-morrow, or even to-night, to bring the allusion more closely to ourselves; and thine own parent is as mortal as any reptile that creeps, or even as the most worthless roisterer of the Electorate, that wasteth his substance, the saving of some gainful parent, perhaps, in riotousness!"

"This is true, father," rejoined the girl, who, though accustomed to the homely morality of the good citizen, never before had heard the Burgomaster deal with so little deference to himself, and who spoke in a lowered tone, as if the reflection of his sudden humility produced a withering influence on

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her own self-esteem. "We are no better than the poorest of Duerckheim, and scarcely as good as poor Lottchen and Berchthold."

A strong ejaculation betrayed Heinrich's displeasure.

"Let these honest people alone," he answered; "since each must be saved or be damned on his own account, let Lottchen and her son take such fare as Providence shall send; we have just now serious matters of great family concernment to occupy us. I would reason with thee gravely, child, and therefore I have need of thy closest attention. It being conceded that I am mortal—an admission thou mayest be certain, Meta, I should not loosely make or without necessity—it follows, as a consequence,—that, sooner or later, I must be taken from thee, when thou wilt be left an orphan. Now this great calamity may befall us both much sooner than thou fanciest; for, I repeat it, we live in perilous times, when hot-headedness and valor may any day bring a man to a premature end."

The round arm of Meta clung more forcibly to the body of the Burgomaster, who took the gentle pressure as so much proof of his child's concern in his supposititious end.

"Why tell me of this, father?" she exclaimed, "when thou knowest it only makes both unhappy! Though young, it may be my fate to die first."

"That is possible, but little probable," returned Heinrich, with a melancholy air. "Giving nature a fair chance, it will be my turn to precede even thy mother, since I have ten good years the start of her; and as for thee, I greatly dread it will be, one day, thy misfortune to be left an orphan. God knows what will be the end of all these contentions that now beset us, and therefore I hold it wise to be prepared. Whenever the evil day of parting may come, Meta, thou wilt be left with a sore companion for one of tender years and little experience."

"Father!"

"I mean money, child, which is a blessing, or a curse, as it proveth. Were I taken suddenly away, many idle and dissolute gallants would beset thee, swearing by their moustaches and beards, that thou wert dearer to them than the air they breathe, when in truth their sole desire would be to look into the leavings of the departed Burgomaster. There is great difficulty in marrying one of thy neutral condition happily, for, while want of birth closeth the door of the castle and the palace against thy entrance, ample means give thee right to look beyond the mere burgher. I would fain have one of good hopes for a son-in-law, and yet no spendthrift."

"That may not be so easy of accomplishment, good father," returned Meta, laughing, for few girls of her years listen to conjectures or plans concerning their future establishment without a nervous irritability that easily takes the appearance of merriment—"to me the world seems divided into those who get and those who spend."

"Or into the wise and foolish. There are three great ingredients that commonly enter into all marriages of girls in thy condition, and without which there is little hope of happiness, or even of every-day respect. The first is the means of livelihood, the second is the consent and blessing of the parents, and the third is equality of condition."

"I had thought thee about to say something of tastes and inclinations, father!"

"Idle conceit, child, that any whim may change. Look at yonder peasant, who is trimming the Abbey vines—dost think him less happy with his cup of sour liquor, than if he quaffed of the best rhenish in Bonifacius's cellar? And yet, had the hind his choice, doubt it not he would be ready to swear none but the liquor of Hockheim should wet lip of his! The fellow might make himself miserable, by mere dint of fancy, were he once to set his mind on other fare; but, taking life soberly and industriously, who so content as he? Oh! I have often envied these knaves their happiness, when vexation and losses have weighed upon my spirits!"

"And wouldest thou change conditions with these vine-trimmers, father?"

"What art thinking of, wench? Is there not such a thing as order and propriety on earth?—And this brings me to my purpose. There has been question to-day concerning some silliness, not to say presumption, on the part of young Berchthold Hintermayer, in wishing to couple his poverty with thy means."

The head of Meta fell abashed, and the

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arm, which clasped the body of her father, trembled perceptibly.

"I doubt that Berchthold has not thought of this," she answered, in a voice but little above her breath, though her respiration was very audible."

"All the better for him, since such a desire would be just as unreasonable as it would be, on thy part, to wish to wed with Count Emich's heir."

"Nay, that silly thought never crossed me!" exclaimed Meta, frankly.

"All the better for thee, girl, since the Herr von Hartenburg has had the boy betrothed these many years. Well, as we now understand each other so well, leave me to my thoughts, for weighty matters press on my mind."

So saying, Heinrich composed himself to reflection, fully content with the parental lesson he had just imparted to his daughter. But, in the few and vague remarks that had fallen from the Burgomaster, Meta found sufficient food for uncomfortable conjecture for the rest of the ride.

During the short dialogue between Heinrich and Meta, there had also been a discourse between Ulrike and the crone that rode on her pillion. The propensity of old Ilse to talk, and the well-tried indulgence of her mistress, induced the former to break silence the moment they were clear of the hamlet, and were so far advanced beyond the rest of the party as to render it safe to speak freely.

"Well," exclaimed the nurse, "this hath been, truly, a day! First had we matins in Duerckheim; and then, the stirring words of Father Johan, with the Abbey mass; and lastly, this high demeanor of the Count Emich! I do not think, good wife, that thou hast ever before seen the Burgomaster so preferred!"

"He is ever in the graces of the Herr von Hartenburg, as thou mayest know, Ilse," returned Heinrich's partner, speaking like one that thought of other things. "I would that they were less friendly at this moment."

"Nay, therein thou dost little justice to thy husband. It is honorable to be honored by the world's honored, and thou shouldest wish the Burgomaster favor with all such, though it were even with the Emperor. But thou wert ever particular, even as a child; and I should not deal too harshly with a propensity that, coming as if it were of nature, is not without reason. Ah! Heaven is even tender with the good! Now what a happy life is thine, Ulrike; here canst thou go forth before all that were once thy equals, a Burgomaster's companion,—and not a varlet between Duerckheim-gate, or indeed thine own gate, and the hold of Hartenburg shall stand covered as thy steed shuffles past. This is it to be fortunate! Then have we worthy Heinrich for a master, and such another for keeping all in due respect is not to be seen in our town; and Meta, who, beyond dispute, is both the fairest and the wisest of her years among all the maidens, and thyself scarcely less blooming than of old, with such health and contentment as might even disarm widowhood of its sorrows. Ah! what a life hath been thine!"

Ulrike seemed to arouse herself from a trance, as the nurse thus chanted praises in honor of her good fortune, and the sigh she drew, unconscious of its meaning, was long and tremulous.

"I complain not of my fate, good Ilse."

"If thou didst, I would cause the beast to halt, that I might quickly descend, for nothing good could come of a journey so blasphemous! No, gratitude before all other virtues, except humility; for humility leadeth to favors, and favor is the lawful parent of gratitude itself. I would thou couldest have been at my last shriving, Ulrike, and thou shouldest have heard questions of nice meaning closely reasoned! It happened that Father Johan was in the confessional, and when he had got the little I had to say of myself in the way of acknowledgment (for, though a great sinner like all human, it is little I can do against Heaven at three score and ten), we came to words concerning doctrine. The Monk maintained that the best of us might fall away, so as to merit condemnation; while I would have sworn, had it been seemly to swear in such a place, that the late Prior, than whom none better ever dwelt in Limburg, always gave comfortable assurance of mercy being safe, when fairly earned. I wonder not that these heresies should be abroad, when the professed throw this dis-

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couragement in the way of the old and weak!"

"Thou art too apt, good Ilse, to dwell on subtleties, when a meeker faith might better become thy condition."

"And what is this condition, prithee, that thou namest it as a disqualifier? Am I not aged—and can any say better what is sin, or what not? Didst thou know what sin was thyself, child, till I taught thee? Am I not mortal, and therefore frail—am I not a woman, and therefore inquiring—and am I not aged, and therefore experienced? No, come to me, an' thou wouldest get insight into real sin—sin that hath much need of grace!"

"Well, let it be thus. But, Ilse, I would recall thy mind to days long past, and take counsel of thy experience in a matter that toucheth me nearly."

"That must be some question of Meta; naught else could touch a mother nearly."

"Thou hast reason in part: 'tis of Meta, and of us all, in sooth, that I would speak. Thou hast now been to the Heidemauer more than once with our girl, in quest of the holy Anchorite?"

"Have I not! Thou mayest well say more than once, since I have twice made that weary journey; and few of my years would have come off so lightly from the fatigue."

"And what is said in the country round of the holy man—of his origin and history, I mean?"

"Much is said; and much that is good and edifying is said. It is thought that one blessing of his is as good as two from the Abbey; for of him no harm is known, whereas there is much reputed of Limburg that had better not be true. For mysel, Ulrike—and I am one that does not treat these matters lightly—I should go away with more surety of favor with a single touch of the Hermit's hand, than if honored with blows from all of Limburg. But, from the account I except Father Arnolph, who if he be not an anchorite, well deserves, from his virtues, to be one. Oh! that is a man, were justice done him, who ought never to taste other liquor than water of the spring, or other food than bread hard as a rock?"

"And hast thou seen him of the Heidenmauer?"

"It hath been sufficient for me to be in sight of his hut. I am none of those that cannot have a good thing in possession, without using it up. I have never laid eyes on the holy man, for that is a virtue I keep in store against some of the sore evils that beset all in age. Let any of the autumn plagues come upon me, and thou shalt see in what manner I will visit him!"

"Ilse, thou mayest yet remember the days of my infancy, and hast some knowledge of most of the events of Duerckheim for these many, many years?"

"I know not what thou callest infancy, but if it mean the first cry thy feeble voice ever made, or the first glance of thy twinkling eyes, I remember both an' it were yesterday's vespers."

"And thou hast not forgotten the youths and maidens than then sported at our merry-makings, and were gay in their time, as these we see to-day?"

"Call you these gay? These are hired mourners compared to those of my youth. You that have been born in the last fifty years know little of mirth and gayety. If thou wouldest learn——"

"Of this we can speak at another season. But since thy memory remains so clear, thou canst not have forgotten the young Herr von Ritterstein; he that was well received of old within my father's doors?"

Ulrike spoke in a low voice, but the easy movement of the beast they rode suffered every word to reach the ear of her companion.

"Do I remember Odo von Ritterstein?" exclaimed the crone. "Am I heathen, to forget him or his crime?"

"Poor Odo! Bitterly hath he repented that transgression in banishment, as I have heard. We may hope that his offence is forgiven!"

"Of whom—of Heaven? Never, as thou livest, Ulrike, can such a crime be pardoned. It will be twenty years this night since he did that deed, as all in the Jaegerthal well know; for there have been masses and exorcisms without number said in the Abbey-chapel on his account. What dost take Heaven to be, that it can forget an offence like that!"

"It was a dreadful sin!" answered Ulrike,

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shuddering, for though she betrayed a desire to exonerate the supposed penitent, horror at his offence was evidently uppermost in her mind.

"It was blasphemy to God and an outrage to man. Let him look to it, I say, for his soul is in cruel jeopardy!"

A heavy sigh was the answer of the Burgomaster's wife.

"I knew young Odo von Ritterstein well," continued the crone, "and, though not ill gifted as to outward appearance, and of most seductive discourse to all who would listen to a honeyed tongue, I can boast of having read his inmost nature at our very first acquaintance."

"Thou understood a fearful mystery!" half whispered Ulrike.

"It was no mystery to one of my years and experience. What is a comely face, and a noble birth, and a jaunting air, and a bold eye, to your woman that hath had her opportunities, and who hath lived long? Nay, nay—young Odo's soul was read by me, as your mass-saying priest readeth his missal; that is, with half a glance."

"It is surprising that one of thy station should have so quickly and so well understood him that most have found inexplicable. Thou knowest he was long in favor with my parents?"

"Aye, and with thee, Ulrike; and this proves the great difference of judgments. But not a single day, nay, not even an hour, was I mistaken in his character. What was his name to me? They say he had crusaders among his ancestors, and that nobles of his lineage bore the sign of the cross, under a hot sun and in a far land, in honor of God; but none of this would I hear. I saw the man with mine own eyes, and with mine own judgment did I judge."

"Thou sawest one, Ilse, of no displeasing mien."

"So thought the young and light-minded. I deny not his appearance; 'twas according to Heaven's pleasure—nor do I say aught against his readiness in exercises, or any other esteemed and knightly qualities, for I am not one to backbite a fallen enemy. But he had a way! Now when he came first to visit thy father, here did he enter the presence of the honest Burgomaster an' he had been the Elector, instead of a mere Baron; and though there I stood, waiting to do him reverence as became his rank, and my breeding, nay, doing him reverence, and that oft repeated, not a look of grace, nor a thank, nor a smile of condescension, did I get for my pains. His eyes could not stoop to the old nurse, but were fastened on the face of the young beauty, besides many other levities.—Oh! I quickly accounted him for what he was!"

"He was of contradictory qualities."

"Worse than that—a hundred-fold worse. I can count you up his graces in brief speech—First was he a roisterer, that never missed occasion to enter into all debaucheries with the very monks he dishonored——"

"Nay, that I did never hear!"

"Is it reasonable to suppose otherwise, after what we know of a certainty? Give me but one bold vice in a man, and I will quickly show you all its companions."

"And is this true? Ought we not rather to think that most yield in their weakest points, while they may continue to resist in the strongest?—That there are faults, which, inviting the world's condemnation, produce indifference to the world's opinion, may be true; but I hope few are so evil as not to retain some portion of their good qualities."

"Hadst thou ever seen a siege, good wife, thou wouldst not say this. Here is your enemy, without the ditch, shouting and screaming, and doing his worst to alarm the garrison.—I say now but what I have thrice seen here, in our very Duerckheim—but so long as the breach is not made, or the ladders placed, each goes his way in the streets, quietly and unharmed. But let the enemy once enter, though it be but by a window, or down a chimney, open fly the gates, and in pour the columns, horsemen and footmen, till not a house escapes rifling, nor a sanctuary violation. Now this blasphemy of Herr Odo was much as if a curtain of wall had fallen at once, letting in whole battalions and squadrons of vices in company."

"That the act was fearful, is as certain as that it was heavily punished; but still may it have been the fault of momentary folly, or of provoked resentment."

"It was blasphemy, and as such it is punished; why then say more in its defence?

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Here cometh Meta within call, and it were well she should not hear her mother justify sin. Remember thou art a mother, and bear thy charge with prudence."

As the horse ridden by the Burgomaster and his daughter drew near, Ulrike ceased speaking, with the patient forbearance that distinguished her intercourse with the old woman. And during the rest of the ride little more passed among the equestrians. On reaching his own abode, however, Heinrich hastened to hold a secret council with the chief men of the place.

The remainder of the day passed as was wont in the towns of that age. The archers practised with their bows, without the walls; the more trained arquebusiers were exercised with their unwieldy but comparatively dangerous weapons; the youthful of the two sexes danced, while the wine-houses were thronged with artisans, who quaffed, after the toil of the week, the cheap and healthful liquor of the Palatinate in a heavy animal enjoyment. Here and there a monk of the neighboring Abbey appeared in the streets, though it was with an air less authoritative and assured, than before the open promulgation of the opinions of Luther had brought into the question so many of the practices of the prevailing Church.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Thus I renounce the world and worldly things."
—ROGERS.

IT will be remembered, that the time of this tale was in the winning month of June. When the sun had fallen beneath those vast and fertile plains of the west, among which the Rhine winds its way, a swift and turbid, though noble current, that, like some bold mountaineer, has made a descent from the passes of Switzerland, to gather tribute from every valley on his passage, there remained in the air the bland and seductive warmth of the season.—Still the evening was not a calm moonlight night, like those which grace a more alluring climate; but there reigned in its quiet, a character of sombre repose that constantly reminded all of the hour. It seemed a moment more adapted to rest than to indulgence. The simple habits of Duerckheim caused its burghers to shut their doors early, and, as usual, the gates of the town were closed when the bells sounded the stroke of eight. The peasants of the Jaegerthal had not even waited so long, before they sought their beds.

It was, however, near ten, when a private door in the dwelling of Heinrich Frey opened, and a party of three individuals issued into the street. All were so closely muffled as effectually to conceal their persons. The leader, a man, paused to see that the way was clear, and then, beckoning to his companions, who were of the other sex, to follow, he pursued his way within the shadows thrown from the houses. It was not long ere they all reached the gate of the town, which opened to the hill of the Heidenmauer.

There was a stronger watch afoot that night, than was usual in Duerckheim, though the city, and especially at a moment when armies ravaged the Palatinate, was never left without a proper guard. A few armed men paced the street at the point where it terminated with the defences, and a sentinel was visible on the superior wall.

"Who cometh?" demanded an arquebusier.

The muffled man approached, and spoke to the leader of the guard in a low voice. It would seem that he spoke him fair; for no sooner did he utter the little he had to say, than a bustle among the citizens announced an eager desire to do his pleasure. The keys were produced, and a way made for the exit of the party. But the man went no farther. Having produced the egress of his companions, he returned into the town, stopping, however, to hold discourse with those on watch, before he disappeared.

When without the gate, the females began to ascend. The way was difficult, for it lay among terraces and vineyards, by means of winding narrow foot-paths, and, as it appeared, the limbs of those who were now obliged to thread them, felt all the difficulties of the steep acclivity. At length, though not without often stopping to breathe and rest, they reached the fallen pile of the ancient wall of the camp. Here both seated themselves, to recover their strength, in profound silence. They had mounted by means of a path that conducted them towards that

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extremity of the mountain which overlooked the valley of our tale.

The sky was covered with fleecy clouds, that dimmed the light of the moon so as to render objects beneath uncertain and dull; though occasionally the mild orb seemed to sail into a little field of blue, shedding all its light below. But these momentary illuminations were too fitful to permit the eye to become accustomed to the change, and ere any saw distinctly, the driving vapor would again intercept the rays. To this melancholy character of the hour must be added the plaintive sound of a night-breeze, which audibly rustled the cedars.

A heavy respiration from the one of the two who, by her air and attire, was evidently the superior, was taken by the other as a permission to speak.

"Well, thrice in my life have I mounted this hill, at night!" she said: "and few of my years could do the deed, by the light of the sun——"

"Hist, Ilse! Hearest thou naught uncommon?"

"Naught but mine own voice, which, for so mute a person, is, in sooth, of little wont——"

"Truly, there is other sound! Come hither to the ruin; I fear we are abroad at a perilous moment!"

As both arose, there was but a minute before their persons were concealed in such a manner as to render it little probable that any but a very curious eye would remark their presence. It was evident that many footsteps were approaching, and nearly in their direction. Ilse trembled, but her companion, more self-possessed, and better supported by her reason, was as much or even more excited by curiosity than by fear. The ruined hut in which they stood was within the cover of the cedars, where a dull light alone penetrated. By means of this light, however, a band of men was seen moving across the camp. They came in pairs, and their march was swift and nearly noiseless. The glittering of a morion, as it passed beneath some opening in the trees, and the reclining arquebuses, no less than their order, showed them to be warriors.

The line was long, extending to some hundreds of men. They came, in this swift and silent manner, from the direction of the Jaegerthal, and passed away, among the melancholy cedars, in that of the plain of the Rhine.

When the last of this long and ghost-like band had disappeared, Ilse appeared to revive.

"In very sooth," she said, "they seem to be men! Do they, too, come to visit the Holy Hermit?"

"Believe it not. They have gone down by the rear of Duerckheim, and will soon be beyond our wishes or our fears."

"Lady! Of what origin are they—and on what errand do they come?"

This exclamation of old Ilse sufficiently betrayed the nature of her own doubts, though the firmness of her companion's manner proved that, now the armed men were gone, she no longer felt distrust.

"This may, or may not, be a happy omen," she answered, musingly. "There was a goodly number, and warriors, too, of fair appearance!"

"Thrice have I visited this camp at night, and never before has it been my fate to view its tenants! Thinkest thou they were Romans—or are they the followers of the Hun?"

"They were living men—but let us not forget our errand."

Without permitting further discourse, the superior of the two then took the way towards the hut of the Hermit. At first her footstep was timid and unassured; for, strengthened as she was by reflection and knowledge, the sudden and sprite-like passage of such a line of warriors across the deserted camp was indeed likely to affect the confidence of one even more bold.

"Rest thy old limbs on this bit of fallen wall, good nurse," said the muffled female, "while I go within. Thou wilt await me here."

"Go, of Heaven's mercy! and speak the holy Anchorite fair. Take what thou canst of comfort and peace for thine own soul, and if there should be a blessing, or a relic more than thou needest, remember her who fondled thy infancy, and who, I may say, and say it I do with pride, made thee the woman of virtue and merit thou art."

"God be with thee—and with me!" murmured the female, as she moved slowly away.

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The visitor of the Anchorite hesitated at the door of his hut. Encouraged by sounds within, and certain that the holy man was still afoot, by the strong light that shone through the fissures of the wall, she at length summoned resolution to knock.

"Enter, of God's will!" returned a voice from within.

The door opened, and the female stood confronted to the person of the Anchorite. The cloak and hood both fell from the female's head, as by an involuntary weakness of her hands—and each stood gazing long, wistfully, and perhaps in doubt, at the other. The female, more prepared for the interview, was the first to speak.

"Odo!" she said, with melancholy emphasis.

"Ulrike!"

Eye then studied eye, in that eager and painful gaze with which the memory traces the changes that time and the passions produce in the human face. In that of Ulrike, however, there was little to be noted but the development of more mature womanhood, with such a shadowing of thought as deeper reflection and diminished hopes are apt to bring; but, had she not been apprised of the person of him she sought, and had her memory not retained so vivid an impression of the past, it is probable that the wife of Heinrich Frey might not have recognized the features of the gayest and handsomest cavalier of the Palatinate, in the sunken but still glowing eye, the grizzled beard, and the worn though bold lineaments of the Anchorite.

"Thou Odo, and a penitent!" Ulrike added.

"One of a stricken soul. Thou seest me, sworn to mortifications and sorrow."

"If repentance come at all, let it be welcome. Thou leanest on a rock, and thy soul will be upheld."

The recluse made a vague gesture, which his companion believed to be the usual sign of the cross. She meekly imitated the symbol, and, bowing her head, repeated an *ave*. In all great changes in religions and politics, the spirit of party attaches importance to immaterial things, which, by practice and convention, come to be considered as the evidences of opinion. Thus it is, when revolutions are sudden and violent, that so many mistake their symbols for their substance, and men cast their lives on the hazards of battle, in order to support an empty name, a particular disposition of colors in an ensign, or some idle significations of terms that were never well explained, long after the real merits of the controversy have been lost by the cupidity and falsehood of those intrusted with the public welfare; and thus it is that here, where all change has been gradual and certain, that the neglect of these trifles has subjected the country to the imputation of inconsistency, because, in attending so much to the substance of their work, it has overlooked so many of those outward signs, which, by being the instruments of excitement in other regions, obtain a value that has no influence among ourselves. The Reformation made early and rude inroads upon the formula of the Romish church. The cross ceased to be a sign in favor with the Protestant; and, after three centuries, it is just beginning to be admitted that this sacred symbol is a more fitting ornament of one of "those silent fingers pointing to the skies," which so touchingly adorn our churches, than the representation of a barnyard fowl! Had Ulrike been more critical in this sort of distinctions, or had her mind been less occupied with her own sad reflections, she might have thought the movement of the Hermit's hand, when he made the sign alluded to, had such a manner of indecision and doubt, as equally denotes one new in practices of this nature, or one about to abandon any long-established ritual. As it was, however, she noted nothing extraordinary, but silently took the seat to which the Anchorite pointed, while he placed himself on another.

The earnest, wistful, and half mournful look of each was renewed. They sat apart, with the torch throwing its light fully upon both.

"Grief hath borne heavily upon thee, Odo," said Ulrike. "Thou art much changed!"

"And innocence and happiness have dealt tenderly by thee! Thou hast well merited this favor, Ulrike."

"Art thou long of this manner of life—or touch I on a subject that may not be treated?"

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"I know not that I may refuse to give the world the profit of my lesson—much less can I pretend to mystery with thee."

"I would gladly give thee consolation. Thou knowest there is great comfort in sympathy."

"Thy pity is next to the love of angels—but why speak of this? Thou art in the hut of a hermit condemned, of his own conscience, to privation and penitence. Go to thy happy home, and leave me to the solemn duty which I have allotted to be done this night."

As he spoke, the Anchorite folded his head in a mantle of coarse cloth, for he was evidently clad to go abroad, and he groaned.

"Nay, Odo, I quit thee not, in this humor of thy mind. The sight of me hath added to thy grief, and it were uncharitable—more, it were unkind, to leave thee thus."

"What wouldst thou, Ulrike?"

"Disburthen thy soul; this life of seclusion hath heaped a load too heavy on thy thoughts. Where hast thou passed the years of thy prime, Odo—what hath brought thee to this condition of bitterness?"

"Hast thou still so much of womanly mercy, as to feel an interest in the fate of an outcast?"

The paleness of Ulrike's cheek was succeeded by a mild glow. It was no sign of tumultuous feeling, but a gentle proof that a heart like hers never lost the affinities it had once fondly and warmly cherished.

"Can I forget the past?" she answered. "Wert thou not the friend of my youth—nay, wert thou not my betrothed?"

"And dost thou acknowledge those long-cherished ties? Oh Ulrike!" with what maddened folly did I throw away a jewel beyond price! But listen and thou shalt know in what manner God hath avenged himself and thee."

The Burgomaster's wife, though secretly much agitated, sat patiently awaiting, while the Hermit seemed preparing his mind for the revelation he was about to make.

"Thou hast no need to hear aught of my youth," he at length commenced. "Thou well knowest that, an orphan from childhood, of no mean estate, and of noble birth, I entered on life exposed to all the hazards that beset the young and thoughtless. I had most of the generous impulses of one devoid of care, and a heart that was not needlessly shut against sympathy with the injured, and, I think, I may say one that was not closed against compassion——"

"Thou dost not justice to thyself, Odo! Say that thy hand was open, and thy heart filled with gentleness."

The Anchorite, humbled as he was by penitence and self-devotion, did not hear this opinion, uttered by lips so gentle and so true, without a change of features. His eye lighted, and for a moment it gazed towards his companion with some of its former bright, youthful expression. But the change escaped Ulrike, who was occupied with the generous impulse that caused her, thus involuntarily, to vindicate the Hermit to himself.

"It might have been so," the latter resumed, coldly, after a moment of thought; "but in youth, unless watched and wisely directed, our best qualities may become instruments of our fall. I was of violent passions above all; miserable traces in that unerring index, the countenance, prove how violent!"

Ulrike had no answer to this remark; for she had felt how easy it is for the strong of character to attach the mild, and how common it is for the human heart to set value on qualities that serve to throw its own into relief.

"When I knew thee, Ulrike, the influence of thy gentleness, the interest thou gavest me reason to believe thou felt in my happiness, and the reverence which the young of our sex so readily pay to innocence, and beauty, and faith, in thine, served to tame the lion of my reckless temper, and to bring me, for a time, in subjection to thy gentleness."

His companion looked grateful for his praise, but she remained silent.

"The tie between the young and guiltless is one of nature's holiest mysteries! I loved thee, Ulrike, purely, and in perfect faith! The reverence I bear, here in my solitude and penance, to these signs of sacred character, is not deeper, less tinctured with human passion, or more fervent, than the respect I felt for thy virgin innocence!"

Ulrike trembled, but it was like the leaf quivering at the passage of a breath of air.

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"For this I gave thee credit, Odo," she whispered, evidently afraid to trust her voice.

"Thou didst me justice. When thy parents consented to our union, I looked forward to the marriage with blessed hope; for young though I was, I so well understood myself, as to foresee that some spirit, persuasive, good, and yet firm as thine, was necessary to tame me. Woman winds herself about the heart of man by her tenderness, nay, by her very dependence, in a manner to effect that which his pride would refuse to a power more evident."

"And couldst thou feel all this?"

"Ulrike, I felt more, was convinced of more, and dreaded more, than I ever dared avow. But all feelings of pride are now past. What further shall I say? Thou knowest the manner in which bold spirits began to assail the mysteries and dogmas of the venerable Church that has so long governed Christendom, and that some were so hardy as to anticipate the reasonings and changes of more prudent heads, by rash acts. 'Tis ever thus with young and heated reformers of abuses. Seeing naught but the wrong, they forget the means by which it has been produced, and overlook the sufficient causes which may mitigate, if they do not justify the evil."

"And this unhappily was thy temper?"

"I deny it not. Young, and without knowledge of the various causes that temper every theory when reduced to practice, I looked eagerly to the end alone."

Though Ulrike longed to extort some apology from the penitent for his own failings, she continued silent. After minutes of thought, the discourse at length proceeded.

"There were some among thy friends, Odo, who believed the outrage less than the convent reported?"

"They trusted too much to their wishes," said the Anchorite, in a subdued tone. "It is most true, that, heated with wine, and maddened with anger, I did violence in presence of my armed followers, to those sacred elements which Catholics so reverence. In a moment of inebriated frenzy, I believed the hoarse applause of drunken parasites, and the confusion of a priest, of more account than the just anger of God! I impiously trampled on the Host, and sorely hath God since trampled on my spirit!"

"Poor Odo!—That wicked act changed the course of both our lives! and dost thou now adore that Being to whom this great indignity was offered—Hast thy mind returned to the faith of thy youth?"

"'Tis not necessary, in order to feel the burthen of my guilt!" exclaimed the Anchorite, whose eye began to lose the human expression which had been kindled by communion with this gentle being, in gleamings of a remorse that had been so long fed by habits of morbid devotion. "Is not the Lord of the universe my God? The insult was to Him; whether there be error in this or that form of devotion, I was in His temple, at the foot of His altar, in the presence of His spirit—There did I mock His rule, and defy His power; and this for a silly triumph over a terrified monk!"

"Heart-stricken Odo! Where soughtest thou refuge, after the frantic act?"

The Anchorite looked intently at his companion, as if a flood of distressing and touching images were pressing painfully upon his memory. "My first thought was of thee," he said; "the rash blow of my sword was no sooner given, than it seemed suddenly to open an abyss between us. I knew thy gentle piety, and could not, even in that moment of frenzy, deceive myself as to thy decision. When in a place of safety, I wrote the letter which thou answered, and which answer was so firm and admirable a mixture of holy horror and womanly feeling. When thou renounced me, I became a vagrant on earth, and from that hour to the moment of my return hither, have I been a wanderer. Much influence and heavy fines saved my estates, which the life of a pilgrim and a soldier has greatly augmented, but never till this summer have I felt the courage necessary to revisit the scenes of my youth."

"And whither strayed thou, Odo?"

"I have sought relief in every device of man:—the gayety and dissipation of capitals—hermitages (for this is but the fourth of which I am the tenant)—arms—and rude hazards by sea. Of late have I much occupied myself in the defence of Rhodes, that unhappy and fallen bulwark of Christendom. But wherever I have dwelt, or in whatever

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occupation I have sought relief, the recollection of my crime, and of its punishment, pursues me. Ulrike, I am a man of woe!"

"Nay, dear Odo, there is mercy for offenders more heavy than thou. Thou wilt return to thy long-deserted castle, and be at peace."

"And thou, Ulrike! hath my crime caused thee sorrow? Thou, at least, art happy?"

The question caused the wife of Heinrich Frey uneasiness. Her sentiments towards Odo von Ritterstein had partaken of passion, and were still clothed with hues of the imagination; while her attachment to the Burgomaster ran in the smoother channel of duty and habit:—Still time, a high sense of her sex's obligations, and the common bond of Meta, kept her feelings in the subdued state which most fitted her present condition. Had her will been consulted, she would not have touched on this portion of the subject at all; but since it was introduced, she felt the absolute necessity of meeting it with composure.

"I am happy in an honest husband and an affectionate child," she said; "set thy heart at rest on this account—we were not fitted for each other, Odo; thy birth, alone, offered obstacles we might not properly have overcome."

The Anchorite bowed his head, appearing to respect her reserve. The silence that succeeded was not free from embarrassment. It was relieved by the tones of a bell that came from the hill of Limburg. The Anchorite arose, and all other feeling was evidently lost in a sudden return of that diseased repentance which had so long haunted him, and which, in truth, had more than once gone nigh to unsettle his reason.

"That signal, Ulrike, is for me."

"And dost thou go forth to Limburg at this hour?"

"An humble penitent. I have made my peace with the Benedictines by means of gold, and I go to struggle for my peace with God. This is the anniversary of my crime, and there will be midnight masses for its expiation."

The wife of Heinrich Frey heard of his intention without surprise, though she regretted the sudden interruption of their interview.

"Odo, thy blessing!" said Ulrike, kneeling.

"Thou, ask this mockery of me!" cried the Hermit, wildly.—"Go, Ulrike!—leave me with my sins."

The Anchorite appeared irresolute for a moment, and then he rushed madly from the hut, leaving the wife of Heinrich Frey still kneeling in its centre.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Mona, thy Druid rites awake the dead!"
—ROGERS.

ULRIKE was in the habit of making frequent and earnest appeals to God, and she now prayed fervently, where she knelt. Her attention was recalled to earth by a violent shaking of the shoulder.

"Ulrike, child!—Frau Frey!" exclaimed the assiduous Ilse—"Art glued to the ground by necromancy? Why art thou here, and whither hath the holy man sped?"

"Sawest thou Odo von Ritterstein?"

"Whom! Art mad, Frau? I saw none but the blessed Anchorite, who passed me an' he were an angel taking wing for heaven; and though I knelt and beseeched but a look of grace, his soul was too much occupied with its mission to note a sinner. Had I been evil as some that might be named, this slight might give some alarm; but being that I am, I set it down rather to the account of merit than to that of any need. Nay, I saw naught but the Hermit."

"Then didst thou see the unhappy Herr von Ritterstein!"

Ilse stood aghast.

"Have we harbored a wolf in sheep's clothing?" she cried, when the power of speech returned. "Hath the Palatinate knelt, and wept, and prayed at the feet of a sinner like ourselves—nay, even worse than ourselves, after all! Hath what hath passed for true coin been naught but base metal—our unction, hypocrisy—our hopes, wicked delusions—our holy pride, vanity?"

"Thou sawest Odo von Ritterstein, Ilse," returned Ulrike, rising, "but thou sawest a devout man."

Then giving her arm to the nurse, for of the two the attendant most required assist-

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ance, she took the way from the hut. While walking among the fallen walls of the deserted camp, Ulrike endeavored to bring her companion to consider the character and former sins of the Anchorite with more lenity. The task was not easy, for Ilse had been accustomed to think the truant Odo altogether abandoned of God, and opinions that have been pertinaciously maintained for twenty years, are not gotten rid of in a moment. Still there is a process by which the human mind can be made to do more than justice, when prejudice is finally eradicated. It is by this species of reaction that we see the same individuals now reprobated as monsters, and now admired as heroes; the common sentiment as rarely doing strict justice in excessive applause as in excessive condemnation.

We do not mean to say, however, that the sentiment of Ilse toward the Anchorite underwent this violent revulsion from detestation to reverence; for the utmost that Ulrike could obtain in his favor, was an admission that he was a sinner in whose behalf all devout Christians might without any manifest impropriety occasionally say an *ave*. This small concession of Ilse sufficiently favored the wishes of her mistress, which were to follow the Hermit to the Abbey church, to kneel at his altars, and to mingle her prayers with those of the penitent, on this the anniversary of his crime, for pardon and peace. We pretend not to show by what cord of human infirmity the wife of Heinrich Frey was led into the indulgence of a sympathy so delicate, with one to whom her hand had formerly been plighted; for we are not acting here in the capacity of censors of female propriety, but as those who endeavor to expose the workings of the heart, be they for good or be they for evil. It is sufficient for our object, that the result of the whole picture shall be a lesson favorable to virtue and truth.

So soon as Ulrike found she could lead her companion in the way she wished, without incurring the risk of listening to stale morals dealt out with a profuse garrulity, she took the path directly towards the convent. As the reader has most probably perused our Introduction, there is no necessity of saying more than that Ulrike and her attendant proceeded by the route we ourselves took in going from one mountain to another. But the progress of Ilse was far slower than that described as our own, in ascending to the Heidenmauer under the guidance of Christian Kinzel. The descent itself was long and slow, for one of her infirmities and years, and the ascent far more tedious and painful. During the latter, even Ulrike was glad to halt often, to recover breath, though they went up by the horse-path over which they had ridden in the morning.

The character of the night had not changed. The moon appeared to wade among fleecy clouds as before, and the light was misty but sufficient to render the path distinct. At this hour, the pile of the convent loomed against the sky, with its dark Gothic walls and towers, resembling a work of giants, in which those who had reared the structure were reposing from their labors. Accustomed as she was to worship at its altars, Ulrike did not now approach the gate without a sentiment of admiration. She raised her eyes to the closed portal, to the long ranges of dark and sweeping walls, and everywhere she met evidences of midnight tranquillity. There was a faint glow upon the side of the narrow giddy tower, that contained the bells, and which flanked the gate; and she knew that it came from a lamp that burnt before the image of the Virgin in the court. This gave no sign that even the porter was awake. She stepped, however, to the wicket, and rang the night-bell. The grating of the bolts quickly announced the presence of one within.

"Who cometh to Limburg at this hour?" demanded the porter, holding the wicket chained, as if distrusting treachery.

"A penitent to pray."

The tones of the voice assured the keeper of the gate, who had means also of examining the stranger with the eye, and he so far opened the wicket as to permit the form of Ulrike to be distinctly seen.

"It is not usual to admit thy sex within these holy walls, after the morning mass hath been said, and the confessionals are empty."

"There are occasions on which the rule may be broken, and the solemn ceremony of to-night is one."

"I know not that.—Our reverend Ab-

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bot is severe in the observance of all decencies——"

"Nay, I am one closely allied to him in whose behalf this service is given," said Ulrike, hastily.—"Repel me not, for the love of God!"

"Art thou of his kin and blood?"

"Not of that tie," she answered, in the checked manner of one who felt her own precipitation, "but bound to his hopes by the near interests of affection and sympathy."

She paused, for at that instant the form of the Anchorite filled the space beside the porter. He had been kneeling before the image of a crucifix hard by, and had been called from his prayers by the soft appeal that betrayed Ulrike's interest in him, every tone of which went to his heart.

"She is mine," he said, authoritatively;—"she and her attendant are both mine.—Let them enter!"

Ulrike hesitated—she scarce knew why,—and Ilse, wearied with her efforts, and impatient to be at rest, was obliged to impel her forward. The Hermit, as if suddenly recalled to the duty on which he had come to the convent, turned and glided away. The porter, who had received his instructions relative to him for whom the mass was to be said, offered no further obstacle, but permitted Ilse to conduct her mistress within. No sooner were the females in the court, than he closed and barred the wicket.

Ulrike hesitated no longer, though she trembled in every limb. Dragging the loitering Ilse after her with difficulty, she took the way directly toward the door of the chapel. With the exception of the porter at the wicket, and the lamp before the Virgin, all seemed as dim and still within as it had been without the Abbey-walls. Not even a sentinel of Duke Friedrich's men-at-arms was visible; but this occasioned no surprise, as these troops were known to keep as much aloof from the more religious part of the tenants of Limburg as was possible. The spacious buildings, in the rear of the Abbot's dwelling, might well have lodged double their number, and in these it was probable they were now housed. As for the monks, the lateness of the hour, and the nature of the approaching service, fully accounted for their absence.

The door of the Abbey-church was always open. This usage is nearly common to every Catholic place of worship in towns of any size, and it contains an affecting appeal, to the passenger, to remember the Being in whose honor the temple has been raised. The custom is, in general, turned to account equally by the pious and the inquisitive, the amateur of the arts, and the worshipper of God; and it is to be regretted that the former, more especially when they belong to a different persuasion or sect, should not oftener remember, that their taste becomes bad when it is indulged at the expense of that reverence which should mark all the conduct of man in the immediate presence of his Creator. On the present occasion, however, there were none present to treat either the altar or its worship with levity. When Ulrike and Ilse entered the chapel, the candles of the great altar were lighted, and the lamps of the choir threw a gloomy illumination on its sombre architecture. The fretted and painted vault above, the carved oak of the stalls, the images of the altar, and the grave and kneeling warriors in stone, that decorated the tombs, stood out prominent in the relief of their own deep shadows.

If it be desirable to quicken devotion by physical auxiliaries, surely all that was necessary to reduce the mind to deep and contemplative awe existed here. The officials of the altar swept past the gorgeous and consecrated structure in their robes of duty; grave, expectant monks were in their stalls, and Boniface himself sat on his throne, mitred and clad in vestments of embroidery. It is possible that an inquisitive and hostile eye might have detected in some weary countenance or heavy eyelid longings for the pillow, and little sympathy in the offices; but there were others who entered on their duties with zeal and conviction. Among the last was Father Arnolph, whose pale features and thoughtful eye were seen in his stall, where he sat regarding the preparations with the tranquil patience of one accustomed to seek his happiness in the duties of his vow. To him might be put in contrast the unquiet organs and severe, rather than mortified, lineaments of Father Johan, who glanced hurriedly from the altar, and its rich decorations, to the spot where the Anchorite knelt,

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as if to calculate to what degree of humiliation and bitterness it were possible to reduce the bruised spirit of the penitent.

Odo of Ritterstein, for there no longer remains a reason for refusing to the Anchorite his proper appellation, had placed himself near the railing at the foot of the choir, on his knees, where he continued with his eyes fixed on the golden vessel that contained the consecrated host he had once outraged—the offence which he had now come, as much as in him lay, to expiate. The light fell but faintly on his form, but it served to render every furrow that grief and passion had drawn athwart his features more evident. Ulrike studied his countenance, seen as it was in circumstances of so little flattery; and, trembling, she knelt by the side of Ilse, on the other side of the little gate that served to communicate between the body of the church and the choir. Just as she had assumed this posture, Gottlob stole from among the pillars, and knelt in the distance, on the flags of the great aisle. He had come to the mass as a ceremony refused to none.

So strong was the light around the altar, and so obscure the aisles below, that it was with difficulty Bonifacius could assure himself of the presence of him in whose behalf this office was had. But when, by contracting his heavy front, so as to form a sort of screen of his shaggy brows, he was enabled to distinguish the form of Odo, he seemed satisfied, and motioned for the worship to proceed.

There is little need to repeat the details of a ceremony it has been our office already to relate in these pages; but as the music and other services had place in the quiet and calm of midnight, they were doubly touching and solemn. There was the same power of the single voice as in the morning, or rather on the preceding day, for the turn of the night was now passed, and the same startling effect was produced, even on those who were accustomed to its thrilling and superhuman melody. As the mass proceeded, the groans of the Anchorite became so audible, that, at times, these throes of sorrow threatened to interrupt the ceremonies. The heart of Ulrike responded to each sigh that escaped the bosom of Odo, and ere the first prayers were ended, her face was bathed in tears.

The examination of the different countenances of the brotherhood, during this scene, would have been a study worthy of a deep inquirer into the varieties of human character, or of those who love to trace the various forms in which the same causes work on different tempers. Each groan of the Anchorite lighted the glowing features of Father Johan with a species of holy delight, as if he triumphed in the power of the offices; and, at each minute, his head was bent inquiringly in the direction of the railing, while his ear listened eagerly for the smallest sound that might favor his desires. On the other hand, the working of the Prior's features were those of sorrow and sympathy. Every sigh that reached him awakened a feeling of pity—blended with pious joy, it is true—but a pity that was deep, distinct, and human. Bonifacius listened like one in authority, coldly, and with little concern in what passed beyond that which was attached to a proper observance of the ritual; and, from time to time, he bent his head on his hand, while he evidently pondered on things that had little connection with what was passing before his eyes. Others of the fraternity manifested more or less of devotion, according to their several characters; and a few found means to obtain portions of sleep, as the rights admitted of the indulgence.

In this manner did the community of Limburg pass the first hours of the day, or rather of the morning, that succeeded the Sabbath of this tale. It may have been, afterwards, source of consolation to those among them that were most zealous in the observance of their vows, that they were thus passed; for events were near that had a lasting influence not only on their own destinies, but on those of the very region in which they dwelt.

The strains of the last hymn were rising into the vault above the choir, when, amid the calm that exquisite voice never failed to produce, there came a low rushing sound, which might have been taken for the murmuring of wind, or for the suppressed hum of a hundred voices. When it was first heard, stealing among the ribbed arches of the chapel, the cow-herd arose from his knees, and disappeared in the gloomy depths of the church. The monks turned their heads, as by a general impulse, to listen, but the com-

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mon action was as quickly succeeded by grave attention to the rites. Bonifacius, indeed, seemed uneasy, though it was like a man who scarce knew why. His gray eyes roamed over the body of darkness that reigned among the distant columns of the church, and then they settled, with vacancy, on the gorgeous vessels of the altar. The hymn continued, and its soothing power appeared to quiet every mind, when the sound of tumult at the great gate of the outer wall became too audible and distinct to admit of doubt. The whole brotherhood arose as a man, and the voice of the singer was mute. Ulrike clasped her hands in agony, while even Odo of Ritterstein forgot his grief in the rude nature of the interruption.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Thy reason, dear venom, give thy reason!"
—*Twelfth Night.*

It is scarcely necessary to explain, that the man who had accompanied Ulrike and Ilse to the gate of Duerckheim, was Heinrich Frey. No sooner had his wife disappeared, and his short conference with the men on watch was ended, than the Burgomaster hurried towards that quarter of the town which lay nearest to the entrance of the Jaegerthal. Here he found collected a band of a hundred burghers, chosen from among their townsmen for resolution and physical force. They were all equipped, according to the fashion of the times, with such weapons of offence as suited their several habits and experience. We might also add, that, as each good man, on going forth on the present occasion, had seen fit to consult his bosom's partner, there was more than the usual display of headpieces, and breastplates, and bucklers.

When with his followers, and assured of their exactitude and numbers, the Burgomaster, who was a man nowise deficient in courage, ordered the postern to be opened, and issued first himself into the field. The townsmen succeeded in their allotted order, observing the most profound silence. Instead of taking the direct road to the gorge, Heinrich crossed the rivulet, by a private bridge, pursuing a footpath that led him up the ascent of the most advanced of the mountains, on that side of the valley. The reader will understand, that this movement placed the party on the hill which lay directly opposite to that of the Heidenmauer. At the period of the tale, cedars grew on the two mountains alike, and the townsmen, of course, had the advantage of being concealed from observation. A half-hour was necessary to effect this lodgment, with sufficient caution and secrecy; but once made, the whole band seemed to consider itself beyond the danger of discovery. The men then continued the march with less attention to order and silence, and even their leaders began to indulge in discourse. Their conversation was, however, guarded, like that of those who felt they were engaged in an enterprise of hazard.

"'Tis said, neighbor Dietrich," commenced the Burgomaster, speaking to a sturdy smith, who acted on this occasion as lieutenant to the commander-in-chief, an honor that was mainly due to the power of his arm, and who, emboldened by his temporary rank, had advanced nearly to Heinrich's side, "'Tis said, neighbor Dietrich, that these Benedictines are like bees, who never go forth but in the season of plenty, and rarely return without rich contribution to their hive. Thou art a reflecting and solid townsman; one that is little moved by the light opinions of the idle, and a burgher that knoweth his own rights, which is as much as to say, his own interests, and one that well understandeth the necessity of preserving all of our venerable usages and laws, at least in such matters as touch the permanency of the welfare of those that may lay claim to have a welfare. I speak not now of the varlets who belong, as it were, neither to heaven nor earth, being condemned of both to the misery of houseless and irresponsible knaves; but of men of substance, that, like thee and thy craft, pay scot and lot, keep bed and board, and are otherwise to be marked for their usefulness and natural rights;—and this brings me to my point, which is neither more nor less than to say, that God hath created all men equal, and therefore it is our right, no less than our duty, to see that Duerckheim is not wronged, especially in that part of her interests that belong, in particularity, to her substantial inhabitants. Do I say that which is reason-

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able, or do I deceive both myself and thee, friend smith?"

Heinrich had a reputation for eloquence and logic, especially among his own partisans, and his appeal was now made to one who was little likely to refuse him any honor. Dietrich was one of those animal philosophers who seem specially qualified by nature to sustain a parliamentary leader, possessing a good organ, with but an indifferent intellect to derange its action. His mind had precisely the description of vacuum which is so necessary to produce a good political or moral echo, more particularly when the proposition is false; for the smallest addition to his capacity might have had such an effect on his replies, as a sounding-board is known to possess in defeating the repetitions of the voice.

"By St. Benedict, Master Heinrich," he answered, "for it is permitted to invoke the saint, though we so little honor his monks, it were well for Duke Friedrich had he less wine in his Heidelberg tuns, and more of your wisdom in his councils! What you have just proclaimed is no other than what I have myself thought these many years, though never able to hammer down an idea into speech so polished and cutting as this of your worship! Let them that deny what I say take up their weapons, and I will repose on my sledge as on an argument not to be answered. We must, in sooth, see Duerckheim righted, and more is the need, since there is this equality between all men, as hath just been so well said."

"Nay, this matter of equality is one much spoken of, but as little understood. Look you, good Dietrich; give me thy ear for a few minutes, and thou shalt get an insight into its justice. Here are we of the small towns born with all properties and wants of those in your large capitals—are we not men to need our privileges—or are we not human, that air is unnecessary for breath—I think thou wilt not gainsay either of these truths."

"He that would do it is little better than an ass!"

"This being established, therefore, naught remains but to show the conclusion. We, having the same rights as the largest towns in the empire, should be permitted to enjoy them; else is language little better than mockery, and a municipal privilege of no more value than a serf's oath."

"This is so clear I marvel any should deny it! And what they say of the villages, Master Burgomaster? Will they, think you, sustain us in this holy cause?"

"Nay, I touch not on the villages, good smith, since they have neither burgomasters nor burghers; and where there is so little to sustain a cause, of what matter is resistance? I speak chiefly of ourselves, and of towns having means, which is a case so clear, that it were manifest weakness to confound it with any other. He that hath right of his side were a fool to enter into league with any of doubtful franchises. All have their natural and holy advantages, but those are the best which are most clear by their riches and force."

"I pray you, worshipful Heinrich, grant me but a single favor, an' you love me so much as a hair."

"Name thy will, smith."

"That I may speak of this among the townsmen!—such wisdom, and conclusion so evident, should not be cast to the winds."

"Thou knowest I do not discourse for vain applause."

"By my father's bones! I will touch upon it with discretion, most honorable Burgomaster, and not as one of vain speech—your honor knows the difference between a mere street babbler and one that hath a shop."

"Have it as thou wilt; but I take not the merit of originality, for there are many good and substantial citizens, and some statesmen, who think much in this manner."

"Well, it is happy that God hath not gifted all alike, else might there have been great and unreasonable equality, and some would have arrived to honors they were little able to bear. But having so clearly explained your most excellent motives, worshipful Heinrich, wilt condescend to lighten the march by an application of its truth to the enterprise on which we go forth?"

"That may be done readily, for no tower in the Palatinate is more obvious. Here is Limburg, and yon is Duerckheim; rival communities, as it were, in interests and hopes, and of necessity but little disposed to do each other favor. Nature, which is a great master of all questions of right and wrong, say-

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eth that Duerckheim shall not harm Limburg, nor Limburg, Duerckheim.—Is this clear?"

"Himmel! as the flame of a furnace, honorable Burgomaster."

"Now, it being thus settled, that there shall be no interference in each other's concerns, we yield to necessity, and go forth armed in order to prevent Limburg doing wrong to a principle that all just men admit to be inviolable. You perceive the nicety; we confess that what we do is weak in argument, and the greater need it should be strong in execution. We are no madcaps to unsettle a principle to gain our ends, but then all must have heed to their interests, and what we do is with a reserve of doctrine."

"This relieves my soul from a mountain!" exclaimed the smith, who had listened with a sort of earnestness that denotes honesty of purpose; "naught can be more just, and woe to him that shall gainsay it, while back of mine carries harness!"

In this manner did Heinrich and his lieutenant lighten the way by subtle discourse, and by arguments that we feel some consciousness may subject us to the imputation of plagiarisms, but for which we can vouch as genuine, on the authority of Christian Kinzel, already so often named.

The high and disinterested intellect that is active in regulating the interests of the world has been so often alluded to, in other places and on different occasions, that it is quite useless to expatiate on it here. We have already said, that Heinrich Frey was a stout friend of the conservative principle, which, reduced to practice, means little more than that

> "They shall get, who have the power,
> And they shall keep, who can."

Justice, like liberality, has great reservations, and perhaps there are few countries, in the present advanced condition of the human species, that do not daily employ some philosophy of the same involved character as this of Heinrich, supported by reasoning as lucid, irresistible, and nervous.

The direction in which the band of Duerckheimers proceeded, led them by a tortuous way, it is true, but surely, to the side of the valley on which the Castle of Hartenburg stood. Heinrich, however, brought his followers to a halt long before they had made the circuit which would have been necessary to reach the hold of Count Emich. The place he chose for the collection and review of the band, was about midway between Duerckheim and the castle, pursuing a line that conformed to the sinuosities and variations of the foot of the mountain. It was in an open grove, where the shadows of the trees effectually concealed the presence of the unusual company. Here refreshments were taken by all, for the good people of the town were much addicted to practices of this consolatory nature, and the occasion must have been doubly urgent that could induce them to overlook the calls of the appetite.

"Seest thou aught of our allies, honest smith?" demanded Heinrich of his lieutenant, who had been sent a short distance along the brow of the hill to reconnoitre. "It were unseemly in men so trained as our friends, to be lacking at need."

"Doubt them not, Master Heinrich. I know the knaves well; they merely tarry to lighten their packs by the way, in consumptions like this of our own. Dost see the manner in which the Benedictines affect tranquillity, worshipful Burgomaster?"

"'Tis their usual ghostly hypocrisy, brave Dietrich; but we shall uncloak them! Good will come of our enterprise, for, of a truth, by this spirit on our part, which shall forever demonstrate the necessity of not meddling in the concerns of a neighbor, we settle all uncertainties between us. By the Kings of Koeln! is it to be tolerated, that a gownsman shall hoodwink a townsman to the day of judgment?—Is there not a light in the Abbey-chapel?"

"The reverend fathers pray against their enemies. Dost think, worshipful Burgomaster, that the tale concerning the manner in which those heavy stones were carried upon Limburg-hill, has received small additions by oft telling?"

"It may be thus, Dietrich; for naught, unless it may be damp snow, gaineth more by repeated rolling, than your story."

"And gold," rejoined the smith, chuckling in a manner not to displease his superior, since it palpably intimated the idea he enter-

tained of the Burgomaster's success in accumulating money, an idea that is always pleasant to those who deem prosperity of this nature to be the principal end of life.—"Gold well rolled increases marvellously! I am of your mind, Master Heinrich; for to speak truth, I much question whether the Evil Spirit would have troubled himself with so light an affair as carrying the smaller materials afoot.—As to the heavy columns, and the hewn key-stones, with other loads of weight, it was so much beneath his character, and may be considered as probable. I have never contradicted that part of the legend, for it hath likelihood to back it, but—ha! here cometh the succor."

The approach of a band of men, who came from the direction of Hartenburg, always keeping along the margin of the hills, and within the shadows, absorbed all attention. This second party was treble the force of the townsmen, like them it was armed, and, like them, it showed every sign of military preparation. When it had halted, which it did at a little distance from the band of Heinrich, as if it were not deemed advisable to blend the two bodies in one, a warrior advanced to the spot where the Burgomaster had taken post. The new-comer was well but lightly armed, wearing head-piece and harness, and carrying his sword at rest.

"Who leadeth the Duerckheimers?" he demanded, when near enough to trust his voice.

"Their poor Burgomaster, in person; would there had been a better for the duty!"

"Welcome, worshipful sir," said the other, bowing with more than usual respect. "In my turn, I come at the head of Count Emich's followers."

"How art thou styled, brave captain?"

"'Tis a name but little worthy to be classed with yours, Herr Frey. But such as it is, I disown it not. I am Berchthold Hintermayer."

"Umph!—A young leader for so grave an enterprise!—I had hoped for the honor of thy lord's company."

"I am commanded to explain this matter to your worship." Berchthold then walked aside with the Burgomaster, while Dietrich proceeded to take a nearer view of the allied force.

It is well known to most of our readers, that every baron of note, at the time of which we write, entertained more or fewer dependants, who, succeeding to the regularly banded vassals of the earlier ages, held a sort of middle station between the servitor and the soldier. There stands a noble ruin, called Pierrefont, within a day's ride of Paris, and on the very verge of a royal forest,—a forest that in some of its features approaches nearer to an American wood than any we have yet met in the other hemisphere—which castle of Pierrefont is known to have been the hold of one of these warlike nobles, who did many and manifest wrongs to the lieges of the king, even in an age considerably later than this of our tale. In short, European society, just then, was in the state of transition, beginning to reject the trammels of feudalism, and struggling to wear its bonds at least in a new and less troublesome form. But the importance and political authority of the Counts of Leiningen fully entitled them to preserve a train that barons of lesser note were beginning to abandon, and consequently all of their castles had many of these loose followers, who have since been entirely superseded by the regularly embodied and trained troops of our own time.

The smith found much to approve, and something to censure, in the party that Berchtold and led to their support. So far as recklessness of character and object, audacity in acts, and indifference to moral checks, were concerned, a better troop could not have been desired, for more than half of them were men who lived by the excesses of the community, occupying exactly that position in the social scale that fungi do in the vegetable, or that sores and blotches fill in the physical economy of the species. But in respect to thews and sinews, a primary consideration with the smith in estimating the value of every man he saw, they were much inferior, as a body, to the townsmen, in whom orderly living, gainful and regular industry, had permitted the animal to become developed. There was, however, a band of peasants, drawn from among the mountains, or inhabitants of the hamlet beneath the castle walls, who, though less menacing in air, and bold of speech, were youths that Dietrich thought only required the Duerckheim training to become heroes.

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When Heinrich and Berchthold rejoined their respective followers, after the private discourse, all discontent was banished from the former's brow, and both immediately occupied themselves in making the dispositions necessary to the success of the common enterprise. The wood, in which they had halted, lay directly opposite to the inner extremity of the Abbey-hill, from which it was separated by a broad and perfectly even meadow. The distance, though not great, was sufficient to render it probable, that the approach of the invaders would be seen by some of the sentinels, who, there was little doubt, the men-at-arms, lent by the Elector to the monks, maintained, were it only for their own security. Limburg was not a fortress, its impunity being due altogether to the moral power that the Church, to which it belonged, still wielded, though it were so much weakened in that part of Germany; but its walls were high and solid, its towers numerous, its edifices massive, and all was so disposed that a body within, resolutely bent on resistance, might well have set at defiance a force like that which now came against it.

Of all these truths Heinrich was sensible, for he had shown courage and gained experience in the defence of places, during a life that was now past its meridian, and which had been necessarily spent amid the tumults and contentions of that troubled age. He looked about him, therefore, with greater seriousness, in order to ascertain on whom he might rely, and the fine and collected deportment of Berchthold Hintermayer gave him that sort of satisfaction which brave men feel by communion with kindred spirits in the moment of danger. When every necessary disposition was made, the party advanced, moving deliberately to preserve their order, and conscious that breath would be necessary in mounting the steep acclivity.

Perhaps there is no time in which the ingenuity of man is more active, than in those moments when he has a sensitive consciousness of being wrong, and consequently a feverish desire to vindicate his works or acts to himself, as well as to others. A deep conviction of truth, and the certainty of being right, fortifies the mind with a high moral dignity, that even disinclines it to the humility of vindication. Thus he who rushes from a dispute in which his own convictions cause him to distrust his own arguments, into rash and general asseverations, betrays the goadings of conscience rather than spirit, and weakens the very cause that it may be his wish to establish. An arrogant assumption of knowledge, especially in matters that our previous habits and education rather disqualify than teach us to comprehend, can only lead to contradiction and detection; and although circumstances may lend a momentary and fallacious support to error, the triumph of truth is as certain as its punishments are severe. Happily, this is an age in which no sophistry can long escape unscathed, nor any injury to natural justice go long unrequited. No matter where the wrong to truth has been committed—on the throne, or in the cabinet, in the senate, or by means of the press—society is certain to avenge itself for the deceptions of which it has been the dupe, and its final judgments are recorded on that opinion which lasts long after the specious triumphs of the plausible are forgotten. It were well that they who abuse their situations, by a reckless disregard of consequences, in order to obtain a momentary object, oftener remembered this fact, for they would spare themselves the mortification, and in some cases the infamy, that is so sure to rest on him who disregards right to attain an end.

Heinrich Frey greatly distrusted the lawfulness of the enterprise in which he was engaged; for, unlike his companions, he had the responsibility of advising, as well as that of execution, on his head. He had, therefore, a restless wish to find reasons of justification for what he did; and as he marched slowly across the meadows, with Berchthold and the smith at his side, his tongue gave utterance to his thoughts.

"There cannot be any manner of doubt of the necessity and justice of what we do to Limburg, Master Hintermayer," he said; for men usually affirm in all dubious cases with a confidence precisely in an inverse ratio to the distrust they feel of the rectitude of their cause:—"else why are we here? Is Limburg forever to trouble the valley and the plain, with its accursed exactions and avarice, or are we slaves for shaven monks to trample on?"

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"There are sufficient reasons, of a truth, for what we do, Herr Burgomaster," answered Berchthold, whose mind had taken a strong bias to the new change in religious opinions, that were then fast gaining ground. "When we have so good motives, let us look no farther."

"Nay, young man, I am certain that the honest smith here will say, no nail that he drives into a hoof can be too well clenched."

"That fact is out of all question, Master Berchthold," answered Dietrich, "and therefore must his worship be right in the whole argument."

"Let it be so; I shall never gainsay the necessity of breaking up a nest of drones."

"I call them not drones, young Berchthold, nor do I come to break them up; but simply to show the world, that he who would deal with the affairs of Duerckheim, hath need of a lesson to teach him not to enter his neighbor's grounds."

"This is wholesome, and will bring great credit on our town!" responded the smith. "The more the pity that we do not press the same matter home upon the Elector too, who hath of late raised new pretensions to our earnings."

"With the Elector the affair may not be discussed, for his interference is of too strong a quality to call upon our manhood in maintaining the right of non-interference. These subtle questions of law are not to be learned over a furnace, but need nice capacities to render them clear; but clear they are,—to all who have the power to understand them. It is more than probable, that to thee, Dietrich, they are not so manifest; but wert thou one of the town-council, thou shouldst look into the question with different eyes."

"That I doubt not, honorable Heinrich, that I doubt not. Could but such an honor light on one of my name and breeding—Himmel! the worshipful council should find a man ready to believe any nicety of this sort, or indeed of any other sort!"

"Ha! There is a light at yonder loop!" exclaimed Berchthold. "This bodes well."

"Hast a friend in the Abbey?"

"Go to, Herr Burgomaster.—This touches on excommunication;—but I much like yon light at the loop!"

"Let there be silence," whispered Heinrich to those in his rear, who passed the order to their fellows. "We draw near."

The party was now at the foot of the hill. Not a sign of their approach being known had yet met them; unless a single taper placed at a dungeon-loop could thus be interpreted. On the contrary, the stillness already described in the approach of Ulrike, reigned over the whole of the vast pile. But neither Heinrich nor his companion liked this fearful quiet, for it boded a defence the more serious when it did come. They would have greatly preferred an open resistance, and nothing would have more relieved the minds of the two leaders, than to have been able to command a rush, under a hot discharge from the arquebusiers of Duke Friedrich.. But this relief was refused them, and the whole band reached a point of the hill, under a flanking tower, where it became necessary to abandon all idea of cover, and to make a swift movement, to gain the road. It was the rush of this evolution which first disturbed the monks in the chapel. The second interruption proceeded from the ruder sounds of the assault, that immediately after was made upon the outer gate, itself.

CHAPTER XIX.

"I'll never
Be such a ghostling to obey instinct, but stand
As if a man were author of himself,
And knew no other line."—*Coriolanus.*

THE assailants, as has been seen, were led by the Burgomaster, and his two lieutenants, Berchthold and the smith. Close at the heels of the latter followed three of his own journeymen, each, like his master, armed with a massive sledge. No sooner did the party reach the gate, than these artisans commenced the duty of pioneers, with great readiness and skill. At the third blow, from Dietrich's brawny arm, the gate flew open, and those in front rushed into the court.

"Who art thou?" cried Berchthold, seizing a man who knelt with a knee on another's breast, immediately across his passage; "speak, for this is not a moment of trifling!"

"Master Forester, be less hot, and remember thy friends. Dost not see it is Gottlob,

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that holdeth the convent porter, lest the knave should use the additional bars? There are strangers within, and, to consult his ease, the faithless varlet hath not done his fastenings properly, else mightest thou have pounded till Duke Friedrich's men were upon thee."

"Bravely done, foster-brother! Thy signal was seen and counted on; but, since thou knowest the ways so well, lead on, at once, against the men-at-arms."

"Himmel! The rogues have bristly beards, well grizzled with war, and may not like to have their sleep thus suddenly broken; but service must be done.—Choose the most godly of thy followers, worshipful Burgomaster, to go against the monks, who are fortified in their choir, and well armed with prayer; while I will lead the more carnal to another sort of work against the Elector's people."

While this short dialogue had place, the whole of the assailants poured through the gate, their officers endeavoring to maintain something like order among the ill-trained band. All felt the imperious necessity of first disposing of the troops; for as respects the monks themselves, there was certainly no cause of immediate apprehension. A few were left, therefore, to guard the gate, while Heinrich, guided by the cow-herd, led his followers toward the buildings where the men-at-arms were known to lodge.

If we were to say that the party advanced to this attack without concern, we should overrate their valor, and do the reputation of the Elector's men injustice. There was sacrilege in the invasion of the convent, according to the predominant opinions of the age; for though Protestantism had made great progress, even reformers had grievous doubts in severing the bonds of habit and long-established prejudices. To this lurking sentiment was added the unaccountable silence that still reigned among the men-at-arms, who, as Gottlob had said, were known to be excellent soldiers at need. They lay in the rear of the Abbot's dwelling, and were sufficiently intrenched behind walls, and among the gardens, to make a fierce resistance.

But all these considerations rather flashed upon the minds of the leaders, than they were maturely weighed. In the moment of assault there is little leisure for thought, especially when the affair gets to be as far advanced as this we are now describing. The men rushed toward the point of attack, accordingly, beset by misgivings rather than entertaining any very clear ideas of the dangers they ran.

Gottlob had evidently made the best of the time he had been at liberty in the Abbey, to render himself master of the intricate windings of the different passages. He was soon at the door of the Abbot's abode, which was dashed into splinters by a single blow of Dietrich's sledge, when there poured a stream of reckless, and we may add lawless, soldiery through the empty apartments. In another moment, the whole of the assailants were in the grounds, in the rear of this portion of the dwellings.

As there is nothing that more powerfully rebukes violence than a calm firmness, so is there nothing so appalling to or so likely to repulse an assault, as a coolness that seems to set the onset at defiance. In such moments, the imagination is apt to become more formidable than the missiles of an enemy; conjuring dangers in the place of those which, in the ordinary course of warfare, might be lightly estimated, were they seen. Every one knows that the moment which precedes the shock of battle is by far the most trying to the constancy of man, and a reservation of the means of resistance is prolonging that moment, and of course increasing its influence.

Every man among the hostile band, even to the leaders, felt the influence of this mysterious quiet among the troops of the Elector. So imposing in fact did it become, that they halted in a group, a position of all others most likely to expose them to defeat,—and there was a low rumor of mines and ambuscades.

Berchthold perceived that the moment was critical, and that there was imminent danger of defeat.

"Follow!" he cried, waving his sword, and springing toward the silent buildings in which it was known the men-at-arms were quartered. He was valiantly seconded by the Burgomaster and the smith, when the whole party resumed its courage, and advanced tumultuously against the doors and

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windows. The sounds of the sledges and the yielding of bars and bolts came next; after which the rush penetrated to the interior. The cries of the assailants rang among empty vaults. There was the straw, the remnants of food, the odor of past debauches, and all the usual disgusting signs of ill-regulated barracks; for in that day, neatness and method did not descend far below the condition of the affluent; but no cry answered cry, no sword or arquebus was raised to meet the blow of the invader. Stupor was the first feeling, on gaining the knowledge of this important fact. Then Heinrich and Berchthold both issued orders to bring the captured porter, who was in the centre of the assailants, before them.

"Explain this," said the Burgomaster, authoritatively. "What hath become of Duke Friedrich's followers?"

"They departed at the turn of the night, worshipful Herr, leaving Limburg to the care of its patron saint."

"Gone! whither, and in what manner?—If thou deceivest me, knave, thy Saint Benedict himself shall not save thee from a flaying!"

"I pray you be not angered, great magistrate, for I say nothing but truth. There came an order from the Elector, as the sun set, recalling his meanest warrior; for, it is said, he is sore pressed, and hath great need of succor."

The silence which followed this explanation was succeeded by a shout, and individuals began to steal eagerly away from the main body, bent on their own designs of pillage.

"What road took the Duke's men?"

"Worshipful Heinrich, they went down by the horse-path, in great secrecy and order, and passed up the opposite mountain, in order to escape troubling the townsmen to open the gates at that late hour. It was their intention to cross the cedars of the Heidenmauer, and, descending on the other side of the camp, to gain the plain in the rear of Duerckheim."

There no longer remained a doubt that the conquest was achieved, and the entire party broke off in bands; some to execute their private orders, and others, like those who had already proved delinquent, to look after their own particular interests.

Until this moment not a solitary straggler had gone near the chapel. As it was not the wish of those who had planned the assault to do personal injury to any of the fraternity, the orders had been so worded as to leave this portion of the Abbey for a time unvisited, in the expectation that the monks would profit by the omission, to escape by some of the many private posterns that communicated with the cloisters. But, as there no longer was an armed enemy to subdue, it now became necessary to think of the fraternity. The process of sacking their dormitories was already far advanced, and the bursts of exultation that began to issue from the buildings, announced that the rich and commodious dwelling of the Abbot himself was undergoing a similar summary process.

"Himmel!" muttered Gottlob, who from the moment of his liberation had not quitted the side of his foster-brother; "our castle rogues are taking deep looks into the books of the most reverend Bonifacius, Master Berchthold! It were good to tell them which are Latin, at least, lest they burthen their shoulders with learning they can never use."

"Let the knaves plunder," replied Heinrich, gruffly; "as much evil as good hath come from that store of letters, and it will be all the better for Duerckheim, were the damnable ammunition of the Benedictines a little less plenty. There are those on the plains who doubt that necromancy is bound up in some of the volumes that bear a saint's name on their backs."

Perhaps Berchthold might have remonstrated, had not his instinct told him, that remonstrance on such a subject, in that moment of riot and confusion, would have been worse than useless. The consequence was, that valuable works and numerous manuscripts, which had been collected during centuries of learned ease, were abandoned to the humor of men incapable of estimating their value, or even of understanding their objects.

"Let us to the monks," said Heinrich, sheathing his heavy blade, for the first time since they had quitted the wood. "Friend smith, thou wilt look to the duties here, and see that what is done is done thoroughly. Remember that thy metal is well heated, and on the anvil, waiting thy pleasure; it must be beaten flat, lest at another day it be remoulded

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into a weapon to do us harm. Go to, Dietrich; thou knowest what we of the town would have, and what we expect of thy skill."

Taking Berchthold by the arm, the Burgomaster led the way toward that far-famed pile, the Abbey-church. They were followed by a body of some twenty chosen artisans, who, throughout the whole of that eventful night, kept close to the two leaders, like men who had been selected for this particular duty.

The same ominous silence reigned around the chapel as had rendered the approach to the quarters of the men-at-arms imposing. But here the invaders went against a different enemy. With most then living, the mysterious power of the Church still possessed a deep and fearful interest. Dissenters had spoken boldly, and the current of public opinion had begun to set strongly against the Romish Church, in all that region, it is true; but it is not easy to eradicate, by the mere efforts of reason, the deep roots that are thrown out by habit and sentiment. At this very hour, we see nearly the entire civilized world committing gross and evident wrongs, and justifying its acts, if we look closely into its philosophy, on a plea little better than that of a sickly taste formed by practices which in themselves cannot be plausibly vindicated. The very vicious effects of every system are quoted as arguments in favor of its continuance; for change is thought to be, and sometimes is, a greater evil than the existing wrong; and men, in millions, are doomed to continue degraded, ignorant, and brutal, simply because vicious opinions refuse all sympathy with those whose hopeless lot it has been to have fallen, by the adventitious chances of life, beneath the ban of society. In this manner does error beget error, until even philosophy and justice are satisfied with making abortive attempts to palliate a disease that a bolder and better practice might radically cure. It will not occasion surprise, therefore, when we say, that both Heinrich and Berchthold had heavy misgivings concerning the merit of their enterprise, as they drew near the church. Perhaps no man ever much preceded his age without at moments distrusting his own principles; and it is certain, that Luther himself was often obliged to wrestle with harassing doubts. Berchthold was less troubled, however, than his companion, for he acted under the orders of a superior, and was both younger and better taught than the Burgomaster. The first of these facts was sufficient of itself, under his habits, to remove a load of responsibility from his shoulders, while the latter not only weakened the influence of previous opinions, but caused those which he adopted to be well fortified. In short, there existed between Heinrich and Berchthold that sort of difference which all must have remarked, in the advancing age in which we live, between him who has inherited his ideas from generations that have passed, and him who obtains them from his contemporaries. The young forester had grown into manhood since the voice of the Reformer was first heard in Germany, and as it happened to be his lot to dwell among those who listened to the new opinions, he had imbibed most of their motives of dissent, without ever having been much subject to the counteracting influence of an opposite persuasion. It is in this gradual manner, that nearly all salutary moral changes are effected, since they who first entertain them, are rarely able to do more, in their generation, than to check the progress of habit; while the duty of causing the current to flow backward, and to take a new direction, devolves on their successors.

In believing that Wilhelm of Venloo would be foremost in deserting his post, in this moment of outrage and tumult, the authors of the assault did him injustice. Though little likely to incur the hazards, or to covet the honors of martyrdom, the masculine mind of the Abbot elevated him altogether above the influence of any very abject passion; and if he had not self-command to curtail the appetites, he had a dignity of intellect which rarely deserts the mentally-gifted in situations of difficulty. When Heinrich and Berchthold, therefore, entered the church, they found the entire community in the choir, remaining, like Roman senators, to receive the blow in their collective and official character. There might have been artifice, as well as magnanimity, in the resolution which had decided Bonifacius to adopt this course; for, coming as they did from the scene of brutal violence without, those who entered the church were much impressed by the quiet solemnity which met them.

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The candles still burned before the altar, the lamps threw their flickering light on the quaint architecture and the gorgeous ornaments of the chapel, while every pale face and shaven head, beneath, looked like some consecrated watchman, placed near the shrine to protect it from pollution. Each monk was in his stall, with the exception of the Prior and Father Johan, who had stationed themselves on the steps of the altar; the first as the officiating priest of the late mass, and the latter under an impulse of his governing and natural exaggeration, which moved him to throw his person as a shield before the vessel that contained the Host. The Abbot was on his throne, motionless, indisposed to yield, and haughty, though with features that betrayed great and condensed passion.

The Burgomaster and Berchthold advanced into the choir alone, for their followers remained in the body of the church, in obedience to a sign from the former. Both were uncovered, and while they walked slowly up the choir, scarce a head moved. Every eye seemed riveted, by a common spell, on the crucifix of precious stones and ivory that stood upon the altar. The blood of Heinrich crept under the influence of this solemn calm, and by the time he had reached the steps, where he stood confronted equally to the Abbot and the Prior, for the former of whom he had quite as much fear as hatred, and for the latter an unfeigned love and reverence, the resolution of the honest Burgomaster was sensibly weakened.

"Who art thou?" demanded Bonifacius, admirably timing his question, by the indecision and the quailing eye of him he addressed.

"By St. Benedict! my face is no such stranger in Limburg that you put this question, most holy Abbot," answered Heinrich, making an effort to imitate the other's composure, that was very sensible to himself, but better concealed from others; "though not shaven and blessed, like a monk, I am one well known to most that dwell in or near Duerckheim!"

"I had better said, '*What* art thou?' Thy name and office are known to me, Heinrich Frey; but in what character dost thou now presume to enter Limburg church, and to show this want of reverence to our altars?"

"To speak thee fairly, reverend Bonifacius, 'tis in the character of the head-man of Duerckheim, a much-injured and long-abused town, that is tired of monkish exactions and monkish pride, and which hath at length assumed the office of doing itself justice, that I appear. We are here to-night, not as peaceful citizens bent on prayers and hymn-singing, but armed, as thou seest, and bold in the intention to do away a nuisance from the neighborhood forever."

"Thy words are as little friendly as thy guise, and what thou sayest here but too well answers to that which thy rude followers perform beyond the walls of this consecrated spot. Hast thou well pondered on this bold step of thy town, Herr Heinrich?"

"If often pondering be well pondering, it hath been before us, Bonifacius, at different meetings, and in various discussions, any time this year past."

"And hast thou no dread of Rome?"

"That is an authority which lessens daily in this region, holy Benedictine. Not to deal doubly by thee, of the two we have most distrusted the anger of Duke Friedrich; but that fear is diminished by the certainty that he hath so much on his hands just now that his thoughts cannot easily turn to other affairs. We did not know, in sooth, that he had recalled his men-at-arms, but had counted on some angry discussion with those obstinate warriors; and thou wilt easily comprehend that their absence hath, in no manner, lessened our faith in our own cause."

"The Elector may regain his power, when a day of reckoning will come for those who have dared to profit by his present distress."

"We are traders and artisans, good Bonifacius, and have made our estimates with some nicety. If the Abbey must be paid for —an event by no means certain—we shall count the bargain profitable so long as it cannot be rebuilt. Brother Luther, we think, is laying a corner-stone that will prevent the Devil from ever attempting to set up that which we now propose to throw down."

"This is thy final answer, Burgomaster?"

"Nay, I say not that, Abbot. Send in thy terms to the town-council to-morrow, and, if we can entertain them, it may happen that a present accommodation shall stop all further claims. But what has here been so

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happily commenced, must be as happily finished."

"Then before I quit these holy walls, hearken to my malediction," returned Bonifacius, rising with priestly and practised dignity;—"on thee and on thy town—on all that call thee magistrate—parent——"

"Stay the dreadful words!" cried a piercing female voice from among the columns behind the choir. "Reverend and holy Abbot, have mercy!" added Ulrike, pale, trembling, and shaken equally with horror and alarm, though her eye was bright and wild, like that of one sustained by more than human purpose: "Holy Priest, forbear! He knows not what he does. Madness hath seized on him and on the town. They are but tools in the hands of one more powerful than they."

At the appearance of Ulrike, Bonifacius resumed his seat, disposed to await the effect of her appeal.

"Thou here!" said Heinrich, regarding his wife with surprise, but entirely without anger or suspicion.

"Happily here, to avert this fearful crime from thee and thy household."

"I had thought thee at thy prayers with the poor Herr von Ritterstein, in his comfortless hermitage of the Heidenmauer!"

"And canst thou think of the deed which hath driven the Herr Odo to this penitence and suffering, and stand here armed and desperate? Thou seest that years do not suffice to relieve a soul on which the weight of sacrilege rests; oh! hadst thou been with me, to witness the agony that preyed upon poor Odo, as he knelt at yonder step, listening to the mass that hath this night been said in his behalf, thou mightest better know how deep is the wound made on the heart that hath been seared by God's anger!"

"This is most strange!" rejoined the wondering Burgomaster; "that those whom I had hoped well disposed of, and that in a manner neither to suspect nor to trouble our enterprise, should cross us at the moment when all is so near completion! Sapperment! young Berchthold, thou seest in what manner matrimony clogs the stoutest of us, though girded with the sword."

"And thou, Berchthold Hintermayer, son of my dearest friend—child of my fondest hope,—thou comest, too, on this unholy errand, like the midnight robber, stealing upon the unarmed and consecrated!"

"None love, or none reverence thee, more than I, Madame Ulrike," answered the youth, bowing with sincere respect; "but wert thou to address thy speech to the Herr Heinrich, it would go at once to him who directs our movements."

"Then on thee, Burgomaster, will be thrown the heaviest load of Heaven's displeasure, as on the leader of the outrage. What matters it that the Benedictines are grasping, or overweening in their respect for themselves, or that some among them have forgotten their vows? Is not this temple devoted to God? Are not these His altars, before which thou hast dared to come, with a hostile heart and an angry purpose?"

"Go to, good Ulrike," returned Heinrich, saluting the cold but ever handsome cheek of his wife, who leaned her head on his shoulder to recall her faculties, while she firmly held his hand with both her own, as if to stay his acts. "Go to, thou art excellent in thy way, but what can thy sex know of policy? This matter hath been had up before many councils; and—by my beard!—tongue of woman cannot shake the resolutions of Duerckheim. Go, depart with thy nurse, and leave us to do our pleasure."

"Is it thy pleasure, Heinrich, to brave Heaven? Dost thou not know, that the crimes of the parent are visited on the child—that the wrong done to-day, however we may triumph in present success, is sure to revisit us in the dread shape of punishment? Were there no other power than conscience, so long as that fearful scourge remains on earth, 'tis vain to expect immunity. Dost thou owe all to thy Duerckheim council and its selfish policy? Hast thou forgotten the hour that my pious parents gave thee my hand, and the manner in which thou then plightedst thy faith to protect me and mine, to assume the place of these departed friends, to be father, and mother, and husband, to her thou tookest to thy bosom? Is Meta—that child of our mutual esteem—naught, that thou triflest with her peace and hopes? Lay aside, then, these hasty intentions, and turn thy mind to thine own abode; bethink thee of those whom Nature and the law condemn to suffer for thy faults, or to whom both have

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given the dearer right to rejoice in thy clemency and mercy."

"Was ever woman so bent on crossing the noble duties of man?" said the Burgomaster, who, spite of himself, had been sensibly moved by this hasty and comprehensive picture of his domestic duties, and who was greatly troubled to find the means of extricating himself from the position in which he stood.—"Thou art better in thy chamber, good Ulrike. Meta will hear of this onset, and have her fears.—Go then, and calm the child; thou shalt have such escort as becometh my quality and thy deserts."

"Berchthold, I make the last appeal to thee. This cruel father, this negligent husband, is too madly bent on his council, and on the wild policy of the town, to remember God! But thou hast young hopes, and sentiments that become thy years and virtue. Dost think, rash boy, that one like Meta will dare trust the last chance of happiness to a participator in this crime, when such an inheritance of guilt will be the portion that shall descend from her own father?"

A stir among the monks, who had hitherto listened with an attention that vacillated between hope and fear, interrupted the answers of the wavering Burgomaster and his young companion. The movement was caused by the entrance of the group which, until now, had stood aloof in the obscurity of the great aisle, but which seized the moment of doubt to advance into the centre of the choir. One, closely muffled, walked from out its centre, and throwing aside the cloak that had concealed his form, showed the armed person of Emich of Leiningen. The moment Ulrike recognized the unbending eye of the Baron, she buried her face in her hands, and quitted the place. She went not unattended, however, for both her husband and Berchthold followed anxiously; nor did either return to the work of the night until he had seen the heart-stricken wife and mother under the protection of a well-chosen company of the townsmen.

CHAPTER XX.

"He who the sword of heaven will bear,
Should be as holy as severe"—*Measure for Measure.*

THE first glances between Emich and Bonifacius were filled with those passions which each had so long dissembled, and of which the reader has already had glimpses during the more unguarded moments of the recent debauch. In the eyes of the Count, triumph mingled with hatred; while there still remained a slight covering of artifice and caution about the lineaments of the Abbot, masks that he scarcely thought it yet expedient to throw entirely aside.

"We owe this visit, then, to thee, Herr Emich?" said the latter, struggling to appear calm.

"And to thine own desert, most holy Bonifacius."

"What wouldst thou, audacious Baron?"

"Peace in this oft-violated valley—humility in shaven crowns—religion without hypocrisy—and mine own."

"I will not talk to thee of Heaven, bold man, for the word were blasphemy in such a presence; but thou art not yet so lost to worldly policy as to overlook the punishment of the empire. Hast thou well counted thy gold, and art thou sure thy coffers are sufficiently stored to rebuild the sainted pile which thy hand would fain destroy—or dost think thy riches can replace all that pious princes have here bestowed, during ages in which the Church hath been duly reverenced?"

"As to thy vessels and precious stones, reverend Abbot, it shall be my heed to preserve them to meet this demand, which haply may never be made; and as to the cost of rebuilding the Abbey, why, the same notable workman that helped first to set it up, will owe me a good turn for punishing those that outwitted him, and sent him away without the promised boon of souls. Though, God's truth! were the fact fairly dived into, I am of opinion that Limburg, after all, hath sent more customers to his furnaces than all the drinking-inns and pot-houses of the Palatinate!"

This sally of their lord produced a general and deriding laugh among his followers, who now began to flock into the church from other parts of the Abbey, with the expecta-

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tion that there was rich plunder to be had in the sanctuary. It was about this time, too, that a brand was cast among the straw of the barracks, and the strong light which glared through the stained windows very effectually told the monks of the inefficiency of further remonstrances.

Notwithstanding his known licentiousness, and the general freedom of his life, the Abbot had imbibed from the high objects of his calling, by that secret process that renders even the least deserving in some measure subject to the influence of their professions, a cast of dignity, and perhaps we might add even of sincerity (for there is often a strange admixture of inherent faith and practical unbelief about the dissolute), that caused him frequently to rise to the level of his most solemn duties. A character strong and masculine as his could not be aroused without displaying some of its latent energies, be it for good or be it for evil; and Emich had doubts of the result when he witnessed the manner in which his enemy succeeded in repressing his fierce resentment, and the expression of clerical dignity and official calmness that reigned in his countenance. The Abbot arose, like a prelate in the undisturbed exercise of his functions, and raising his voice, so as to send his words to the deepest recesses of the chapel, he spoke after the manner of the peculiar rites of the Church he served.

"God, in His hidden wisdom, hath permitted to the wicked a momentary triumph," he said; "we search not now into the reasons of this mysterious dispensation; the truth will be known in His own time:—but, as servitors of the altar—as guardians of this holy sanctuary—as the sworn and professed of Heaven—as one consecrated and blessed—there remaineth a solemn, an imperative duty to perform."

"Bonifacius, beware!" interrupted the Count of Leiningen; "thou dealest not now with burgomasters and weeping wives."

"In the behalf, then, of that God to whom this shrine hath been raised," continued the unmoved Abbot, "in His holy interest, and in His holy name——"

"At thy peril, priest!" and Emich shook, partly in anger, and partly in a terror he could scarce explain.

"As his unworthy but necessary minister—as consecrated and blessed—gifted with the power by the head of the Church, and now required to use it, do I pronounce thee——"

"Where are ye, followers of Hartenburg? Down with the silly maledictions of this madmonk; remember ye are not trembling women, to need a Benedictine's blessing!"

The voice of Emich was drowned, as well as that of the Abbot, by the noises that were now raised in the chapel. The first interruption came from a long dark instrument, that was thrust from out of the aisle behind the throne of Bonifacius, and within a few feet of his head; an interruption that filled the whole edifice with the wild, plaintive strains of the mountains.

This signal, which came from the cherry-wood trumpet of Gottlob, who rarely went abroad without this badge of his profession, was immediately followed by a general shout from the band of the count, and by a variety of similar sounds, that were raised by different instruments that had hitherto been mute. The effect of these shrill strains, echoing among the vaulted and fretted roofs, which were brightly illuminated by the growing and fierce light that now pervaded the church, and of the seeming calm of the Abbot, who ended his malediction, spite of the uproar, is left to the reader's imagination. When he had finished the unheard curse, Bonifacius looked about him in gloomy observation.

It was evident to his cool and instructed mind, which was far too earthly in its habits to cling to any hopes of a merely spiritual nature, that the outrage had already gone so far, as to render it more hazardous to his enemy to retreat than to advance. Signing to the community, he descended slowly, and with dignity, from his throne, and led the way from the choir. The ready monks obeyed, the fraternity walking from that extraordinary scene in their customary silent order. Emich followed the dark procession with a troubled eye, for even the conqueror regards the calm retreat of his foes with uneasiness, and there was an instant of painful distrust of his own purpose, as the last flowing robe vanished through a private door that led to a secret postern, by which the routed Benedictines quitted a mountain where they had so long dwelt in the calm, and, we might

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add, in the ease, of an affluent and privileged seclusion.

The invaders of the Abbey took this open abandonment of the place, by its ancient possessors, to be an unequivocal admission of their triumph. There is no moment so likely to produce excesses as that in which the uncertainty of strife is changed to the certainty of victory. The feelings seem willing to avenge themselves for all their previous doubts, and man is ever too ready to ascribe his successes to some inherent qualities, which give him an apparent right to abuse any advantages that may happen to be their consequence. The band of the castle and the people of the town, among whom a large proportion had to the last distrusted the presence of the community, to which vulgar opinion attributed the power of working miracles, no sooner found themselves, as they believed, in undisputed possession of the mountain, than the reaction of feeling, to which there has just been allusion, urged them to increase their violence, and to redouble those efforts which had momentarily been checked.

A shout of triumph was the common signal for renewing the assault. It was followed by the crashing of windows, and the overthrow of every fixture in the body of the church that was not too solid to resist their first and ill-directed efforts, and a general mutilation of the monuments and labored statuary. Marble cherubs fell on every side, wings and limbs of angels separated from the trunks, and the grave and bearded visages of many an honored saint were doomed to endure contumely and fractures. Even the inferior altars were no longer respected, but they and their decorations were ruthlessly scattered, as if the enmity of the conquerors was transferred from those who had administered at them, to the dreaded Being in whose name the rites had been celebrated.

The reader will imagine the confusion and tumult that attended a scene like this. During the uproar, Emich buried his face in his mantle, and paced to and fro in the choir, which his presence, and perhaps some lingering reverence for the sacred spot, still preserved from violence. He was joined only by the Burgomaster and Berchthold, the remainder of the party having mingled with those who were destroying the chapels and decorations of the church. Heinrich seated himself in one of the vacant stalls, for the recent scene and the subsequent parting with his wife had shaken his resolution; while the young forester advanced respectfully to the side of his lord.

"Is the Herr Count troubled?" demanded the latter, after a moment of deferential silence.

Emich dropped the cloak, and leaning a hand familiarly on the shoulder of his young servitor, he stood regarding the gorgeous riches and elaborate beauty of the high altar, all of which was rendered doubly imposing by the powerful light that now illuminated the whole interior of the edifice, which was never more beautiful than as then seen, with its strong relief and deep shadows.

"Berchthold, there is a God!" he said with emphasis.

"None but the fool doubts it, Herr Emich."

"And he hath His ministers on earth—those whom He hath commissioned to do Him pleasure, and to burn His incense."

"We have high authority for this belief, my good Lord."

"We have—the authority is high, that hath so much antiquity—which so suits our secret desires—which descends to us from our fathers."

"And which is so supported by proofs, sacred and profane."

"Thou hast been well schooled, good Berchthold," said the Count, looking earnestly at his companion.

"Heaven left me a pious and tender mother, when it took my father away."

Emich continued to lean on the shoulder of Berchthold, while his eye, in which sternness of purpose was singularly blended with the waverings of doubt, never turned from its contemplation of the altar. Above the chased and gilded cabinet which contained the Host, was a small picture of the Mother of Christ, delineated in those mild and attractive colors with which the pencil is accustomed to portray the Virgin Wife of Joseph. Her eye seemed to meet the gaze of Emich in sorrow. It was easy to fancy the gentle expression was in reproach of the sacrilege.

"These Benedictines are at length un-

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housed"—he continued, trying fruitlessly to avert his look from that mild but expressive image; "they have too long ridden roughly on their betters."

Berchthold bowed.

"Dost thou see aught strange, youth, in that image of Maria?"

"'Tis a skilful design, Herr Count, and a fair face to regard."

"Methinks it looks upon this violence with an evil eye!"

"'Tis but the work of an ingenious man, my Lord, and cannot look other than it hath always seemed."

"Dost think thus, Berchthold? There are many who pretend that images and paintings have been known to speak, when it was Heaven's pleasure."

"They relate such legends, my good Lord, but these are events that are little wont to touch those who are not much disposed to see them."

"And yet in these facts had my fathers faith, and in this belief was I trained!"

Berchthold was mute, his own education having been more suited to the growing opinions of the times.

"That God *can* surpass the ordinary workings of Nature, to effect His pleasure," continued Emich, "we may at least believe."

"It may be believed, Herr Count, but is it necessary? He who made Nature may use it at His pleasure."

"Ha! thou hast no faith in miracles, boy!"

"I am myself a miracle, that tells me every moment of the existence of a superior power; and in that much I bend to its control. But it hath never been my fortune to hear an image speak, or see it do aught else that belongs to the will."

"By my father's bones! but thou art fit to deal with the cunningest knave that wears a cowl! How now, brave followers!" turning toward his people; "leave no vestige of the roguery and abominations that have so long been done within these polluted walls!"

"Herr Count!" said Berchthold eagerly, presuming in his haste to touch the cloak of Emich, "here are the Benedictines!"

The word caused the bold, and at that moment the independent, Baron to turn suddenly, laying a hand on his sword, as he did so. But the hand released its grasp, and the features of Emich immediately reverted to their former expression of anxiety and doubt, at what he now beheld.

By this time all of the different edifices which composed the Abbey of Limburg were fired, the church and its immediate appendages alone excepted. The consequence was such an increase of light within the latter, as penetrated the most obscure of its Gothic recesses. The choir, above all, received the strongest illumination; and young Berchthold thought its tracery never appeared so beautiful as in that fearful moment of impending destruction. The candles and lamps of the great altar began to look dim, and all around prevailed the glorious and fiery brightness which accompanies a fierce conflagration. During the instant that Emich was turned toward his people, two monks had come from the sacristy, and placed themselves on the steps of the altar. They were the Prior and Father Johan. The former bore a small ivory crucifix, which from time to time he kissed, while the latter placed at his feet a massive and curiously carved chest, of sufficient size and weight to have required the aid of a lay-brother to bring it from its repository.

The countenance of the Prior was mild, persuasive, and filled with holy concern; that of his companion flushed, excited, and bearing the look of feverish fire, which is the effect of an enthusiasm that springs as much from temperament as from conviction.

Emich looked at the Benedictines uneasily, and he advanced so near, always attended by the forester, as to be within reach of his arm.

"'Fore God, but ye are tardy, Fathers," he said, determined to assume an indifference he was far from feeling; "the pious Bonifacius hath departed many minutes, and quickened, as he is, by love of his person, I make no question that his footsteps have already gone down the mountain-side!"

"Thou hast at length yielded to the whispering of the Devil, Count of Leiningen!" returned the Prior; "thou art resolute that this blot shall rest upon thy soul!"

"We are not at confession, holy Arnolph, but engaged in a knightly redressing of our rights; if thou hast aught here that is dear to thee, take it, of God's name, and go thy way. Thou shalt have safe conduct, were it

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to the gates of Rome; for, of all my fraternity, thou art he for whom alone I feel regret or amity, in this just enterprise."

"I know not this difference in love, when it touches the existence of our shrine, or the duty that ties us to its service. This question is not between thee and me, Lord Emich, but between thee and God."

"Have it as thou wilt, Herr Prior, so thou dost but depart in peace."

"I am not weak enough to resist when resistance is vain," mildly answered the monk; "nor am I quick to desert my post, while there is hope. Thou hast not well bethought thee of this act, Emich; thou hast not remembered thy posterity, nor thy kind interest in the noble Ermengarde!"

"Dost fancy me an uxurious citizen, reverend Arnolph, that thou wouldst fain stop a knight in his onset by speaking of the good wife and her babes?"

As he concluded, Emich laughed.

"Thou hast not well conceived me. This is not a question of death in battle, or of the grief of those who survive; for such thoughts are, unhappily, but too common with those who rule the earth, to raise disquiet; but I would speak to thee of the long future and of its pains. Dost thou know, irreverend Baron, that the God of Israel—who is my God and thine—the God of Israel hath said that he will visit the sins of the parent upon the descendant, from generation to generation? and yet, blinded by this specious success, thou seemest to court His anger."

"This may be so or not; for ye of the cloisters have many subtle ways of reasoning as you wish; but to me it seemeth better that each should suffer for his own sins; and such, I take it, is what the community of Limburg doth now undergo."

"That we have done much evil, and neglected much good, is, alas, too true!"

"By the Kings of Koeln! thou art getting to be of our side, holy Arnolph!"

"For such is the common course," continued the unmoved Prior,—"but that thou art not our judge is equally certain. That each does and will suffer for his own acts is beyond denial, but the fearful consequences of crime do not stop with him who hath committed it. This much is taught us by reason, and what is still more sure, it is consecrated by words from God's own mouth. Ponder, then, while thou mayest, on the load of sorrow thou art heaping on thy descendants; remember that thou standest there, subject to goading passions, the miserable being thou art, simply that in thy person thou payest the price of a parent's sins. What our common father did is still avenged on us his children."

"How now, Herr Prior! thou pushest my pedigree much beyond its pretensions. Noble and princely, if thou wilt, but I pass not the dark ages in any of my claims. Let them that have greater ambition pay for the purchase in the way thou namest; I am content with more modern honors."

Emich spoke jeeringly, but the attentive monk saw that he was troubled.

"If thou hast no thought for posterity—none for thyself—none for thy God, Emich," the latter resumed, "bethink thee of those who have gone before. Hast already forgotten thy visit to the tombs of thy family?"

"Thou hast me there, Arnolph!—those sacred vaults have been thy convent's shield these many months!"

"And thou art now disposed to forget them?"

"If thou wilt ask yon honest men, they will tell thee, Prior, they have no order to spare the meanest of thy marble cherubs, even though it hover over a grave of mine own house."

"Then do I indeed despair of touching thy heart!" answered Father Arnolph, sorrowing as much for the crime as for its consequences. "Then indeed art thou madly and ruthlessly bent, not only on our destruction, but on thine own; for pity for the child, and love of the parent, are equally despised. Emich of Leiningen, I curse thee not—this is a weapon too fearful for human hands lightly to wield. I bless thee not; duty to God forbids the holy office."

"Hold! reverend Arnolph, let us not part in anger—I would, in sooth, crave from thy worthy hands some touch of consolation—if—ay—if there be chapel in this church, for which thou hast more than usual reverence, let it be named, and I swear, by knight's faith, unless the work be already done, it shall stand unscathed amid the ruins, in testimony of my love for thee—or if thou hast

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aught here of price, whether of monkish or worldly value, point it out, that it may be held safe for thy better leisure. In return, I ask but the parting words of peace."

"'Tis forbidden to those who war against God," returned the grieved Prior, releasing his robe from the eager grasp of the Baron—"I can and will pray for thee, Emich; but to bless thee were treachery to Heaven!"

So saying, the pious Arnolph buried his face in his dress, to shut out the view of the profanation that was working around him, and withdrew slowly from the choir.

CHAPTER XXI.

"Avaunt!
Incarnate Lucifer! 'tis holy ground:
A martyr's ashes now lie there, which make it
A shrine."—BYRON.

DURING the foregoing scene, the Benedictine, already known to the reader as Father Johan, had awaited its issue with a species of lofty patience on the steps of the altar. But in a character so exaggerated, there remained little that was purely natural; even the forbearance of the monk partook of the forced and fervid qualities of his mind. Conventual discipline, deep and involuntary respect for the Prior, and that very disdain which he felt for all gentle means of recalling a sinner to the fold, kept him tolerably tranquil, while Emich and his spiritual superior held their parley; but there was a gleam of wild delight in his eye, when he found, of all that powerful and boasted fraternity, that he alone remained to defend the altars. The feeling of the moment in such a breast, notwithstanding the scene of tumult that rather increased than diminished in the church, was that of triumph. He exulted in his own constancy, and he anticipated the effects which were to follow from his firmness, with the self-complacency of a prurient confidence, and with the settled conviction of an enthusiast.

Emich took little heed of his presence, during the first moments that succeeded the departure of the Prior. There is a majesty and a quiet energy in truth and sound principles, that happily form their constant buttresses. Without this wise provision of Providence, the world would be hopelessly abandoned to the machinations of those who consider all means lawful, provided the ends tend to their own success. All near the Abbey of Limburg had felt the influence of these high qualities in Father Arnolph, and it is more than probable that, as in the case of the city of Canaan, had the community contained four of his spiritual peers, the Abbey would not have fallen.

The Count, in particular, who, like all that first break from mental servitude, was so often troubled with strong doubts, had long entertained a deep respect for this monk; and it is not improbable, that had the pious Arnolph fully understood his own power, by an early and more vigilant use of his means, he might have found a way to avert the blow that had now alighted on Limburg. But the meekness and modesty of the Prior were qualities as strongly marked as his more active virtues, and the policy of Limburg was not of a character to rely on either for its security.

"There is good in that brother," said Emich to Berchthold, when his thoughtful eye again rose to the face of the young forester.—"Had he been mitred, instead of Bonifacius, our rights might have still suffered."

"Few are more beloved than Father Arnolph, Herr Count, and none so deserve to be."

"Thou art of this mind! How now, Master Heinrich! art in monkish meditation in thy stall, or dost dispose of the lesson of the virtuous Ulrike, more at thy ease, in a seat where so much substantial carnal aliment hath been digested by godly Benedictines? Come to the front, like a stout soldier, and give us the savor of thy good wisdom in this strait."

"Methinks, our work is well-nigh done, Lord Emich," answered Heinrich, complying with the request; "my faithful townsmen are not idle in the chapels and among the tombs, and the sledge of yon smith dealeth with an angel an' it were a bar of molten iron. Each stroke leaves a mark that no chisel will repair!"

"Let the knaves amuse themselves; every blow is quickened by the recollection of some hard penance. Thou seest that they place

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the confessionals in a pile ready for the torch! This is attacking the enemy in his citadel. But Heinrich, is the excellent Ulrike wont to come forth with thee in thy frays against the Church? God's judgments! were Ermengarde of this humor, we should have no hope of salvation in our castle!"

"You do my wife injustice, Herr Count; Ulrike was here to pray, and not to encourage."

"Thou mightest have spared the explanation, for truly such encouragement never did soldier need! Wert privy to the visit,—ha!—wert privy, worthy Burgomaster?"

"To speak you honestly, Herr Emich, I thought the woman otherwise bestowed."

"By the Magi!—in her bed?"

"Nay, at her prayers, but in a different place. But we do her too much honor, noble Emich, to let the movements of a mere housewife occupy our high thoughts in this busy moment."

"Nothing that touches thee is of light concern with thy friends, good Burgomaster," answered the Baron, who pondered with instinctive uneasiness, even in that moment of tumult, on this visit of Ulrike to the Benedictines, at an hour so unusual. "Thou art well wived, Herr Heinrich, and all that know thy consort do her honor!"

The Burgomaster was a man by far too well satisfied with his own superior merits to harbor jealousy. Self-complacency might have been at the bottom of his security, though it were scarce possible for one even much more addicted by nature to that tormenting passion, to have lived so long in perfect familiarity with the pure mind of Ulrike, without feeling reverence for its principles and virtue. The sentiments of the Baron were very different; for though in his heart equally convinced of the character of her to whom he alluded, he could not altogether exclude the suspicions of a man of loose habits, nor the uneasiness of one who had himself been discarded. The answer of the husband, however, served to turn the discourse, by giving the Burgomaster an opportunity of placing himself in the most prominent relief.

"A thousand thanks, illustrious Herr," he said, raising his cap; "the woman is not amiss, though much troubled with infirmity on the score of altars and penances. When we shall have fairly disposed of Limburg, another reign will commence among our wives and daughters, and we can hope for more quiet Sabbaths. As to this grace of your present speech, Lord Count, I take it, as was no doubt meant, to be another pledge of our lasting amity and close alliance."

"Thou talkest well," quickly answered Emich, losing the passing feeling of distrust in the recollection of his present purpose; "no words of friendship are lost, on a true and sworn supporter. Well, Heinrich, is our affair finally achieved?"

"Sapperment! Herr Count, if not finished, it is in a fair way to be so quickly."

"Here remaineth a Benedictine!" said Berchthold, drawing their attention to the monk, who still maintained his post on the steps of the altar.

"The bees do not relish quitting their hive, while any of the hard earnings are left," said the Count, laughing; "what wouldst thou, Father Johan?—if thy careful mind hath had thought of the precious vessels, make thy choice and depart."

The Benedictine returned the laugh of the noble, with a smile of deep but quiet exultation.

"Assemble thy followers, rude Baron," he said; "call all within thy control to this sanctified spot, for there yet remaineth a power to be overcome of which thou hast not taken heed; at the moment when thou fanciest thyself most secure, art thou nearest to disgrace and to destruction."

As the excited monk suited his words by a corresponding energy of emphasis and tone, Emich recoiled a step, like one who distrusted a secret mine. The desperate character of Father Johan's enthusiasm was well-known, and neither of the three listeners was without apprehension that the fraternity, aware of the invasion, had plotted some deep design of vengeance, which this exaggerated brother had been deputed to execute.

"Ho! without there!" cried the Count.—"Let a party descend quickly to the crypt, and look to the villanies of these pretended saints; cousin of Viederbach," revealing in the eagerness of the moment the presence of this sworn soldier of the Cross, "see thou to our safety, for the Rhodian warfare hath

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made thee familiar with these treacheries."

The call of the Count, which was uttered like a battle-cry, stayed the hands of the destroyers. Some rushed to obey the order, while most of the others gathered hastily into the choir. It is certain that the presence of fellow-sufferers diminishes the force of fear, even though it may in truth increase the danger; for such is the constitution of our minds, that they willingly admit the influence of sympathy whether it be in pain or pleasure. When Emich found himself backed by so many of his band, he thought less of the apprehended mine, and he turned to question the monk, with more of the calmness that became his condition.

"Thou wouldst have the followers of Hartenburg, Father," he said, ironically, "and thou seest how readily they come!"

"I would that all who have listened to schismatics—all who refuse honor to the holy Church—all who deny Rome—and all that believe themselves on earth freed from the agency of Heaven, now stood before me!" answered the Benedictine, examining the group of heads that clustered among the stalls, with the bright but steady eye of one engrossed with the consciousness of his force. "Thou art in hundreds, Count Leiningen—would it were God's pleasure that it had been in millions!"

"We are of sufficient strength for our object, monk."

"That remaineth to be seen. Now, listen to a voice from above!—I speak to you, unhallowed ministers of the will of this ambitious Baron—to you, misguided and ignorant tools of a scheme that hath been plotted of evil, and hath been brought forth from the prolific brain of the restless Father of Sin. Ye have come at the heels of your lord, vainly rejoicing in a visible but impotent power—impiously craving the profits of your unholy enterprise, and forgetting God!——"

"By the mass, priest!" interrupted Emich; "thou hast once already given us a sermon to-day, and time presseth. If thou hast an enemy to present, bring him forth; but we tire of these churchly offices."

"Thou hast had thy moment of wanton will, abandoned Emich, and now cometh the judgment—seest thou this box of precious relics?—dost thou forget that Limburg is rich in these holy remains, and that their virtues are yet untried?—Woe to him who scoffeth at their character, and despiseth their power!"

"Stay thy hand, Johan!" cried the Count, hastily, when he saw that the monk was about to expose some of those well-known vestiges of mortality to which the Church of Rome then, as now, attributed miraculous interventions; "this is no moment for fooleries!"

"Callest thou this sacred office by so profane a name?—abide the issue, foul-mouthed asperser of our holy authority, and triumph if thou canst!"

The Count was much disturbed, for his reason had far less influence now in supporting him than his ambition. The party in the rear, too, began to waver, for opinion was not then sufficiently confirmed to render the mass indifferent to such an exposure of clerical power. Whatever may be the difference that exists between Christian sects concerning the validity of modern miracles, all will allow, that, when trained in the belief of their reality, the mind is less prepared to resist their influence than that of any other engine by which it can be assailed, since it is placing the impotency of man in direct and obvious collision with the power of the Deity. Before such an exhibition of force, Nature offers no means of resistance; and the mysterious and unseen agency by which the wonder is produced, enlists in its interest both the imagination and that innate dread of omnipotence which all possess.

"'Twere well this matter went no farther!" said Emich, uneasily whispering to his principal agents.

"Nay, my Lord Count," answered Berchthold, calmly, "it may be good to know the right of the matter. If we are not of Heaven's side in this affair, let it be shown in our own behalf; and if the Benedictines are no better than pretenders, our consciences will be all the easier."

"Thou art presuming, boy—none know the end of this!—Herr Heinrich, thou art silent?"

"What would you have, noble Emich, of a poor Burgomaster? I will own, I think it

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were more for the advantage of Duerckheim that the matter went no farther."

"Thou hearest, Benedictine!" said the Count, laying the point of his sheathed sword on the richly chased and much reverenced box that the monk had already unlocked —"this must stop here!"

"Take away the weapon, Emich of Leiningen," said Father Johan, with dignity.

The Count obeyed, though he scarce knew why.

"This is a fearful instant for the unbeliever," continued the monk; "the moment is near when our altars shall be avenged—nay, recoil not, bold Baron—remain to the end, ye dissolute and forsaken followers of the wicked, for in vain ye hope to flee the judgment."

There was so much of tranquil enthusiasm in the air and faith of Father Johan, that, spite of a general wish to be at a distance from the relics, curiosity, and the inherent principle of religious awe, held each man spell-bound; though every heart beat quicker as the monk proceeded, calmly, and with a reverential mien, to expose the bones of saints, the remnants of mantles, the reputed nails of the true cross, and morsels of its wood, with divers other similar memorials of holy events and of sainted martyrs. Not a foot had power to retire. When all were laid, in solemn silence, on the bright and glowing shrine, Father Johan, crossing himself, again turned to the crowd.

"What may be Heaven's purpose in this strait, I know not," he said; "but withered be the hand, and forever accursed the soul, of him who dareth violence to these holy vestiges of Christian faith!"

Uttering these ominous words, the Benedictine faced the crucifix, and kneeled in silent prayer. The minute that followed was one of fearful portent to the cause of the invaders. Eye sought eye in doubt, and one regarded the fretted vault, another gazed intently at the speaking image of Maria, as if each expected some miraculous manifestation of divine displeasure. The issue would have been doubtful, had not the cherry-wood trumpet of the cow-herd again sounded most opportunely in his master's behalf. The wily knave blew a well-known and popular imitation of the beasts of his herd, among the arches of the chapel, striking at the effect of what had just passed by the interposition of a familar and vulgar idea. The influence of the ludicrous, at moments when the passions vacillate, or the reason totters, is too well known to need elucidation. It is another of those caprices of humanity that baffle theories, proving how very far we are removed from being the exclusively reasoning animal we are fond of thinking the species.

The expedient of the ready-witted Gottlob produced its full effect. The most ignorant of the castle followers, those even whose dull minds had been on the verge of an abject deference to superstition, took courage at the daring of the cow-herd; and, as the least founded in any belief are commonly the most vociferous in its support, this portion of the band echoed the interruption from fifty hoarse throats. Emich felt like a man reprieved; for under the double influence of his own distrust, and the wavering of his followers, the Count for a moment had fancied his long-meditated destruction of the community of Limburg in great danger of being frustrated.

Encouraged by each other's cries, the invaders returned to their work laughing at their own alarm. The chairs and confessionals had been already heaped in the great aisle, and a brand was thrown into the pile. Fire was applied to the church wherever there was food for the element, and some of the artisans of Duerckheim, better instructed than their looser associates, found the means to light the conflagration in such parts of the roofs, and the other superior stories, as would insure the destruction of the pile. In the meantime, all the exterior edifices had been burning, and the whole hill, to the eye of him who dwelt in the valley beneath, presented volumes of red flame, or of lurid smoke.

During the progress of this scene, Emich paced the choir, partly exulting in his success, and partly doubting of its personal fruits. Over the temporal consequences he had well pondered; but the motionless attitude of Father Johan, the presence of the long-reverenced relics, and the denunciations of the Church, still had their terrors for one whose mind had few well-grounded resources to sustain it. From this state of uneasiness

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he was aroused by the noise of the sledge, at work in the crypt. Followed by Heinrich and Berchthold, the Count hastened to descend to this place, which it will be remembered contained the tombs and the chapel of his race. Here, as above, all was in bright light, and all was in confusion. Most of the princely and noble tombs had already undergone mutilation, and no chapel had been respected. Before that of Hartenburg, however, Albrecht of Viederbach stood, with folded arms and a thoughtful eye. The cloak which, during the commencement of the attack, had served to conceal his person, was now neglected, and he seemed to forget the prudence of disguise, in deep contemplation.

"We have at length got to the monuments of our fathers, cousin;" said the Count, joining him.

"To their very bones, noble Emich!"

"The worthy knights have long slept in evil company; there shall be further rest for them in the chapel of Hartenburg."

"I hope it may be found, Herr Graf, that this adventure is lawful!"

"How!—dost thou doubt, with the work so near accomplished?"

"By the mass! a soldier of Rhodes might better be fighting your turbaned infidel, than awakening the nobles of his own house from so long a sleep, at so short a summons!"

"Thou canst retire into my hold, Herr Albrecht, if thy arm is wearied," said Emich, coldly; "not a malediction can reach thee there."

"That would be poor requital for a free hospitality, cousin; the travelling knight is the ally of the last friend, even though there be some wrong to general duties. But we cavaliers of the island well know, that a retreat, to be honorable, must be orderly, and not out of season. I am with thee, Emich, for the hour, and so no more parley. This was the image of the good Bishop of our line?"

"He had some such reverend office, I do believe; but speak of him as thou wilt, none can say he was a Benedictine."

"It had been better, cousin, since this church is to be sacked, that our predecessors had found other consecrated ground for their dust. Well, we sworn soldiers pass uneven lives! It is now some twelve months or so, that, like a loyal and professed Rhodian, I stood to my knees in water, making good a trench against your believer in Houris and your unbeliever in Christ; and now, forsooth, I am here as a spectator (none call me more with honesty), while a Christian altar is overturned, and a brotherhood of shaven monks are sent adrift upon earth, like so many disbanded mercenaries!"

"By the Three Kings! my cousin, thou makest a fit comparison; for like disbanded mercenaries have they gone forth to prey upon society in a new shape.—Spare the angel of my grandfather, good smith," cried Emich, interrupting himself; "if there be any virtue in the image, 'tis for the benefit of our house!"

Dietrich stayed his uplifted arm, and directed the intended blow at another object. The marble flew in vast fragments at each collision with his sledge, and the leaders of the party soon found it necessary to retire, to avoid the random efforts of the heated crowd.

There no longer remained a doubt of the fate of these long-known and much celebrated conventual buildings. Tomb fell after tomb, monuments were defaced, altars were overturned, chapels sacked, and every object that was in the least likely to resist the action of fire received such indelible injuries as rendered its restoration difficult or impossible.

During the continuance of their efforts, the conflagration had advanced, as the fierce element that had been called in to assist the destroyers is known to do its work. Most of the dormitories, kitchens, and outer buildings were consumed, so far as the materials allowed, beyond redress; and it became apparent that the great church and its dependencies would soon be untenable.

Emich and his companions were still in the crypt, when a cry reached them, admonishing all within hearing to retreat, lest they become victims to the flames. Berchthold and the smith drove before them the crowd from the crypt, and there was a general rush to gain the outer door.

When the interior of the church was clear, the Count and his followers paused in the court, contemplating the scene, with curious

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eyes, like men satisfied with their work. No sooner was the common attention directed back toward the spot from whence they had just escaped, than a general cry, that partook equally of wonder and horror, broke from the crowd. As the doors were all thrown wide, and every cranny of the building was illuminated by the fierce light of the flames that were raging in the roofs, the choir was nearly as visible to those without as if it stood exposed to the rays of a noon-day sun. Father Johan was still kneeling before the altar.

In obedience to the commands of Emich, the sacred shrine had been stript of its precious vessels, but none had presumed to touch a relic. On these long-venerated memorials, the Benedictine kept his eyes riveted, in the firm conviction that, sooner or later, the power of God would be made manifest in defence of His violated temple.

"The monk! the monk!" exclaimed fifty eager voices.

"I would fain save the fanatic!" said Emich, with great and generous concern.

"He may listen to one who beareth this holy emblem," cried the Knight of Rhodes, releasing his cross from the doublet in which it had been concealed. "Will any come with me to the rescue of this mad Benedictine?"

There was as much of repentant atonement in the offer of Albrecht of Viederbach, as there was of humanity. But the impulse which led young Berchthold forward, was purely generous. Notwithstanding the imminent peril of the attempt, they darted together into the building, and passed swiftly up the choir. The heat was getting to be oppressive, though the great height of the ceilings still rendered it tolerable. They approached the altar, advising the monk of his danger by their cries.

"Do ye come to be witnesses of Heaven's power?" demanded Father Johan, smiling with the calm of an inveterate enthusiast; "or do ye come, sore-stricken penitents that ye have done this deed?"

"Away, good father!" hurriedly answered Berchthold; "Heaven is against the community to-night; in another minute, yon fiery roof will fall."

"Hearest thou the blasphemer, Lord? Is it thy holy will, that——"

"Listen to a sworn soldier of the Cross," interrupted Albrecht, showing his Rhodian emblem—"we are of one faith, and we will now depart together for another trial."

"Away! false servant! and thou, abandoned boy!—See ye these sainted relics?——"

At a signal from the knight, Berchthold seized the monk by one side, while Albrecht did the same thing on the other, and he was yet speaking as they bore him down the choir. But they struggled with one that a long-encouraged and morbid view of life had rendered mad. Before they reached the great aisle, the fanatic had liberated himself, and, while his captors were recovering breath, he was again at the foot of the altar. Instead of kneeling, however, Father Johan now seized the most venerated of the relics, which he held on high, audibly imploring Heaven to hasten the manifestation of its majesty.

"He is doomed!" said Albrecht of Viederbach, retiring from the church.

As the Knight of Rhodes rushed through the great door, a massive brand fell from the ceiling upon the pavement, scattering its coals like so many twinkling stars.

"Berchthold! Berchthold!" was shouted from a hundred throats.

"Come forth, rash boy!" cried Emich, with a voice in which agony was blended with the roar of the conflagration.

Berchthold seemed spell-bound. He gazed wistfully at the monk, and darted back again towards the altar. An awful crashing above, which resembled the settling of a mountain of snow about to descend in an avalanche, grated on the ear. The very men who, so short a time before, had come upon the hill ready and prepared to slay, now uttered groans of horror at witnessing the jeopardy of their fellow-creatures; for, whatever we may be in moments of excitement, there are latent sympathies in human nature, which too much use may deaden, but which nothing but death can finally extinguish.

"Come forth, young Berchthold! come forth, my gallant forester!" shouted the voice of the Count above the clamor of the crowd, as if rallying his followers with a battle-cry. "He will die with the wretched monk!—The youth is mad!"

Berchthold was struggling with the Benedictine, though none knew what passed be-

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tween them. There was another crash, and the whole pavement began to glow with fallen brands. Then came a breaking of rafters, and a scattering of fire that denoted the end. The interior of the chapel resembled the burning shower which usually closes a Roman girandola, and the earth shook with the fall of the massive structure. There are horrors on which few human eyes can bear to dwell. At this moment nearly every hand veiled a face, and every head was averted. But the movement lasted only an instant. When the interior was again seen, it appeared a fiery furnace. The altar still stood, however, and Johan miraculously kept his post on its steps. Berchthold had disappeared. The gesticulations of the Benedictine were wilder than ever, and his countenance was that of a man whose reason had hopelessly departed. He kept his feet only for a moment, but withering fell. After which his body was seen to curl like a green twig that is seared by the flames.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves."
—*Midsummer Night's Dream.*

THE constant moral sentinel that God hath set on watch in every man's breast, but which acts so differently in different circumstances, though, perhaps, in no condition of humiliation and ignorance does it ever entirely desert its trust, is sure to bring repentance with the sense of error. It is vain to say that this innate sentiment of truth, which we call conscience, is the mere result of opinion and habit, since it is even more apparent in the guileless and untrained child than in the most practised man, and nature has so plainly set her mark upon all its workings as to prove its identity with the fearful being that forms the incorporeal part of our existence. Like all else that is good, it may be weakened and perverted, or be otherwise abused; but, like everything that comes from the same high source, even amid these vicious changes, it will retain traces of its divine author. We look upon this unwearied monitor as a vestige of that high condition from which the race fell: and we hold it to be beyond dispute, that precisely as men feel and admit its influence, do they approach, or recede from, their original condition of innocence.

The destruction of the Abbey was succeeded by most of those signs which attend all acts of violence, in degrees that are proportioned to previous habits. Even they who had been most active in accomplishing this long-meditated blow began to tremble for its consequences; and few in the Palatinate heard of the deed, without holding their breaths like men who expected Heaven would summarily avenge the sacrilege. But in order that the thread of the narrative should not be broken, we will return to our incidents in their proper order, advancing the time but a few days after the night of the conflagration.

The reader will have to imagine another view of the Jaegerthal. There was the same smiling sun, and the same beneficent season; the forest was as green and waving, the meadows were as smooth and dark, the hill-sides as bright beneath the play of light and shade, while the murmuring brook was as limpid and swift as when first presented to his eye in these pages. Not a hut or cottage was disturbed, either in the hamlets or along the travelled paths, and the Hold of Hartenburg still frowned in feudal power and baronial state, on the well-known pass of the mountains, gloomy, massive, and dark. But the hill of Limburg presented one of those sad and melancholy proofs of the effects of violence which are still scattered over the face of the old world, like so many admonitory beacons of the scenes through which its people have reached their present state of comparative security:—beacons that should be as useful in communicating lessons for the future, as they are pregnant with pictures of the past.

The outer wall remained unharmed, with the single exception of the principal gate, which bore the indelible marks of the smith's sledges; but above this barrier the work of devastation appeared in characters not to be mistaken. Every roof, and there had been fifty, was fallen; every wall, some of which were already tottering, was blackened; and not a tower pointed towards the sky that did not show marks of the manner in which the flames had wreathed around its slender shaft. Here and there a small thread of white smoke curled upwards, losing itself in the currents

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of the air, resembling so many of the lessening symptoms of a volcano after an explosion. A small crucifix, which popular rumor said was wood, but which, in fact, was of painted stone, still kept its place on a gable of the ruined church; and many a peasant addressed to it his silent prayers, firm in the belief that God had protected this image of His sacrifice throughout the terrors of the memorable night.

In and about the castle there appeared the usual evidences of a distrustful watch;—such ward as is kept by him who feels that he has justly become obnoxious to the hand of the constituted powers. The gates were closed; the sentinels on the walls and bastions were doubled; and, from time to time, signals were made that communicated with lookouts, so stationed on the hills that they could command views of the roads which led toward the Rhine, beyond the gorge of the valley.

The scene in Duerckheim was different, though it also had some points of resemblance with that in the hold. There was the same apprehension of danger from without, the same watchfulness on the walls and in the towers, and the same unusual display of an armed force. But in a town of this description, it was not easy to imitate the gloomy reserve of baronial state. The citizens grouped together in the streets, the women gossiped as in all sudden and strong cases of excitement, and even the children appeared to reflect the uneasiness and indecision of their parents; for as the hand of authority relaxed in their seniors, most wandered idly and vaguely among the men, listening to catch such loose expressions as might enlighten their growing understandings. The shops were opened, as usual, but many stopped to discourse at the doors, while few entered; and most of the artisans wasted their time in speculations on the consequence of the hardy step of their superiors.

In the meantime there was a council held in the town-hall. Here were assembled all who laid claim to civic authority in Duerckheim, with some who appeared under the claim of their services in the late assault upon the monks. A few of the anxious wives of the burghers, also, were seen collected in the more public rooms of the building; for domestic influence was neither covert nor trifling in that uxorious and simple community. We shall resume the narrative within the walls of this municipal edifice.

The Burgomaster and other chief men were much moved by the vague apprehension which was the consequence of their hazardous experiment. Some were bold in the audacity of success; some doubted merely because the destruction of the brotherhood seemed too great a good to come unmixed with evil; some held their opinions in suspense, waiting for events to give a value to their predictions, and others shook their heads in a manner that would appear to imply a secret knowledge of consequences that were not apparent to vulgar faculties. The latter class was more remarkable for its pretension to exclusive merit than for numbers, and would have been equally prompt to exaggerate the advantages of the recent measure had the public pulse just then been beating on the access. But the public pulse was on the decline, and, as we have said, seeing and understanding all the advantages that were to be hoped from the defeat of Bonifacius, uncertainty quickened most imaginations in a manner to conjure disagreeable pictures of the future. Even Heinrich, who wanted for neither moral nor physical resolution, was disturbed at his own victory, though if questioned he could scarcely have told the reason why. This uneasiness was heightened by the fact that most of his compeers regarded him as the man on whom the weight of the Church's and of the Elector's displeasure was most likely to fall, though it is more than probable that his situation would have been far less prominent had there been no question of any results but such as were agreeable.

This sort of distinction, so isolated in defeat, and so social in prosperity, is a species of revenge that society is very apt to take of all who pretend to be wiser or better than itself by presuming to point the way in cases of doubtful expediency, or in presuming to lead the way in those that require decision and nerve. He alone is certain of an unenvied reputation who, in preceding the main body in the great march of events, leaves no very sensible space between him and his fellows; while he alone can hope for impunity who keeps so near his backers as to be able to confound himself in the general mass

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when singularity brings comment and censure.

Heinrich fully felt the awkwardness of his position, and, just then, he would gladly have compounded for less of the fame acquired by the bold manner in which he had led the attack, in order to be rid of some of his anxiety. Still a species of warlike instinct led him to put the best face on the affair, and when he addressed his colleagues, it was with cheerfulness in his tones, however little there might have been of that desirable feeling in his heart.

"Well, brethren," he said, looking around at the knot of well-known faces which surrounded him in the gravity of civic authority, "this weighty matter is, at length, happily, and, as it has been effected without bloodshed, I may say peaceably, over! The Benedictines are departed, and though the excellent Abbot hath taken post in a neighboring Abbey, where he sends forth brave words to frighten those who are unused to more dangerous missiles, it will be long before we shall again hear Limburg bell tolling in the Jaegerthal."

"For that I can swear," said the smith, who was among the inferiors that crowded a corner of the hall, occupying as little space as possible in deference to their head-men; —"my own sledge hath helped to put the fine-tuned instrument out of tune!"

"We are now met to hear further propositions from the monks; but as the hour set for the arrival of their agent is not yet come, we can lighten the moments by such discourse as the circumstances may seem to require. Hast anything to urge that will ease the minds of the timid, brother Wolfgang?—if so, of God's name, give it utterance, that we may know the worst at once."

The affinity between Wolfgang and Heinrich existed altogether in their civic relations. The former, although he coveted the anticipated advantages that were to result from the downfall of Limburg, had a constitutional deference for all superior power, and was unable to enjoy the triumph without the bitterest misgivings concerning the displeasure of the Elector and Rome. He was aged, too—a fact that served to heighten the tremor of tones that, by a very general convention, are termed raven.

"It is wise to call upon the experienced and wise, for counsel, in pressing straits," returned the old burgher, "for years teach the folly of everything human, inclining us to look at the world with moderation, and with less love for ourselves and our interests——"

"Brother Wolfgang, thou art not yet yielding so fast as thou wouldst have us believe," interrupted Heinrich, who particularly disliked any discouraging views of the future. "Thou art but a boy—the difference between us cannot be greater than some five-and-twenty years."

"Not that, not that;—I count but three-and-seventy, and thou mayest fairly number fifty-and-five."

"Thou heapest honors on me I little deserve, friend Wolfgang. I shall not number the days thou namest these many months, and Time marches fast enough without any fillips from us to help him. If I have yet seen more than fifty-four, may my fathers arise from their graves to claim the little they left behind, when they took leave of earth!"

"Words will make neither young, but I could wish we had found means to lay this unquiet spirit of Limburg without so much violence and danger to ourselves. I am old, and have little interest in life, except to see those who will come after me happy and peaceful. Thou knowest that I have neither chick nor child, neighbor Heinrich, and the heart of such a man can only beat for all. 'Twere, indeed, folly in me to think of much else than of that great future which lies before us."

"Sapperment!" exclaimed the smith, who was disposed to presume a little on the spirit he had shown in the late attack.—"Worshipful Burgomaster, were Master Wolfgang to deal out some of his stores a little freely to the Benedictines, the whole affair might be quietly settled, and Duerckheim would be a great gainer. I warrant you now, that Bonifacius would be glad to receive a well-told sum in gold, without question or farther account, in lieu of his lodgings and fare in Limburg, of which he was only a life-tenant at best. At least such had been my humor, an' it had pleased Heaven to have made me a Benedictine, and Bonifacius a smith."

"And where is this gold to be had, bold-speaking artisan?" demanded the aged burgher, severely.

"Where but from your untouched stores, venerable Wolfgang?" answered the single-minded smith; "thou art old, father, and, as thou truly sayest, without offspring; the hold of life is getting loose, and to deal with thee in frankness, I see no manner in which the evil may be so readily turned from our town."

"Peace, senseless talker! dost think thy betters have no other employment for their goods than to cast them to the winds, as thy sparks scatter at the stroke of the sledge? The little I have hath been gained with sore toil and much saving, and it may yet be needed to keep want and beggary from my door. Nay, nay, when we are young we think the dirt may be turned into gold; hot blood and lusty limbs cause us to believe man equal to any labor, ay, even to living without food; but when experience and tribulation have taught us truth, we come to know, neighbors, the value of pence. I am of a long-living stock, Heaven help us! and there is greater likelihood of my yet becoming a charge to the town than of my ever doing a tithe of that this heedless smith hath hinted."

"By St. Benedict, master! I hinted naught; what I said was in plain words, and it is this, that one so venerable for his years, and so respected for his means, might do great good in this strait! Such an act would sweeten the few days thou yet hast."

"Get thee away, fellow; thou talkest of death an' it were a joke. Do not the young go to their graves as well as the old, and are there not instances of thousands that have outlived their means? No, I much fear that this matter will not be appeased without mulcting the artisans in heavy sums;—but happily, most that belong to the crafts are young and able to pay!"

The reply of the smith, who was getting warm in a dispute in which he believed all the merit was on his own side, was cut short by a movement among the populace, who crowded the outer door of the town-house; the burghers seemed uneasy, as if they saw a crisis was near, and then a beadle announced the arrival of a messenger from the routed community of Limburg. The civic authorities of Duerckheim, although assembled expressly with the expectation of such a visit, were, like all men of but indifferently regulated minds, taken by surprise at the moment. Nothing was digested, no plan of operations had been proposed, and, although all had dreamed for several nights of the very subject before them, not one of them all had thought upon it. Still it was now necessary to act, and after a little bustle, which had no other object than an idle attempt to impose upon the senses of the messenger by a senseless parade, orders were given that the latter should be admitted.

The agent of the monks was himself a Benedictine. He entered the hall, attended only by the city-guard who had received him at the gate, with his cowl so far drawn upon his head as to conceal the features. There was a moment of curiosity, and the name of "Father Siegfried" was whispered from one to another, as each judged of the man by the exterior.

"Uncover, of Heaven's mercy! Father," said Heinrich, "and seat thyself as freely in the town-hall of Duerckheim as if thou wert at thy ease in the ancient cloisters of Limburg. We are lions in the attack, but harmless as thy marble cherubs when there is not occasion for your true manly qualities; so take thy seat, of God's name! and be of good cheer;—none will harm thee."

The voice of the Burgomaster lost its confidence as he concluded. The Benedictine was calmly removing the cowl; and when the cloth fell, it exposed the respected features of Father Arnolph.

"He that comes in the service of Him I call master, needeth not this assurance," answered the monk; "still I rejoice to find ye in this mood, and not bent on maintaining an original error, by further outrages. It is never too late to see our faults, nor yet to repair them."

"I cry thy mercy, Holy Prior! we had taken thee for a very different member of the fraternity, and thou art not the less welcome for being him thou art."

Heinrich arose respectfully, and his example was followed by all present. The Prior seemed pleased, and a glow, like that which a benevolent hope creates, passed

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athwart his countenance. With perfect simplicity he took the offered stool, as the least obtrusive manner of inducing the burghers to resume their seats. The experiment produced the effect he intended.

"I should pretend to an indifference I do not feel, were I to say, Heinrich Frey, that I come among you, men to whom I have often administered the rites of the Church during long and watchful years, without the wish to find that my ministrations are remembered."

"If there dwelleth knave in Duerckheim whose heart hath not been touched by thy good works, Father, the hound is without bowels, and unfit to live among honest people."

"Most true!" exclaimed the smith, in his audible by-play. "The Burgomaster doth us all justice! I never struck spark from iron more freely than I will render respect to the most reverend Prior. His prayers are like tried steel, and next to those of him of the hermitage are in most esteem among us. Fill me an abbey with such men, and for one I shall be ready to trust all our salvation to their godliness, without thought or concern for ourselves. Sapperment! could such a community be found, it would be a great relief to the laymen, and more particularly to your artisan, who might turn all his thoughts to his craft, with the certainty of being watched by men capable of setting the quickest-witted devil at defiance!"

Arnolph listened to this digression with patience, and he acknowledged the courtesy and friendliness of his reception by a slow inclination of the head. He was too much accustomed to hear these temporal applications of the spiritual interests of which he was a minister, to be surprised at anything; and he was too meek on the subject of his own deserving, to despise any because they were weaker than himself. The Christian religion seems to be divided into two great classes of worshippers: those who think its consolations are most palpable in their direct and worldly form, and those whose aspirations are so spiritualized, and whose thoughts are so sublimated as to consider it a metaphysical theory, in which the principal object is to preserve the logical harmony. For ourselves, we believe it to be a dispensation from God to those of his creatures who are fearfully composed of the material and immaterial, and that so far as it is connected with our probation here, it is never to be considered as entirely distinct from one or the other of the great attributes of our nature. It is evident that such were not the views of the honest smith; and it is probable had the matter been thoroughly sifted, it would have been found that, as respects Duerckheim, he was altogether of the popular party.

"Thou comest, Father, like the dove to the ark, the bearer of the olive branch," resumed Heinrich; "though for our northern regions a leaf of the oak would more likely have been the emblem, had Ararat been one of these well-wooded hills of ours."

"I come to offer the conditions of our brotherhood, and to endeavor to persuade the misguided in Duerckheim to accept them. The holy abbots, with the right reverend fathers in God, the Bishops of Spires and Worms, now assembled in the latter city, have permitted me to be the bearer of their terms, an office I have sought, lest another should forget to entreat and influence in the desire to menace."

"Gott bewahre! thou hast done well, as is thy wont, excellent Arnolph! Threats are about as useful with Duerckheim as the holy water is in our rhenish, both being well enough in their places; but he that cannot be driven must be led, and liquor that is right good in itself needeth no flavor from the Church. As for this old misunderstanding between Limburg of the one side, and the noble Count of Hartenburg with our unworthy town of the other, the matter may be said to be now of easy adjustment, since the late events have cleared it of its greatest difficulty; and so, from my heart, I wish thee joy of thy mission, and felicitate the town that it hath to treat with one so skilful and so reasonable. Thou wilt find us in a friendly humor, and ready to meet thee half-way; for I know not the man in Duerckheim that desireth to push the controversy a foot further, or who is not at heart content."

"No, that would be out of reason and charity," said the smith, speaking again among the auditors. "We ought to show those Benedictines an example of moderation neighbors; and therefore for one, though no better than a poor artisan that gaineth his

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bread by blows on the anvil, do I agree with the worshipful Heinrich, and say, of God's name! let us be reasonable in our demands, and be content with as little as may be, in the settlement of our dispute."

The Prior listened patiently, as usual, but a hectic glowed, for an instant, on his cheek. It disappeared, and the benevolent blue eye was again seen shining amid features that the cloister and the closet had long since robbed of all other bloom. "Ye know, burghers of Duerckheim," he answered, "that in assailing the altars of Limburg ye set a double power at defiance;—that of the Church, as it is constituted and protected on earth, and that of God. My errand, at this moment, is to speak of the first. Our Father of Worms is sorely angered, and he has not failed to address himself directly and promptly to our Father at Rome. In addition to this reverend appeal, messengers have been dispatched to both the Elector and Emperor, as well as to divers of the Ecclesiastical Princes who rule on the banks of the Rhine. This is a fearful array of power to be met by a mountain baron, and a city whose walls can be measured by the leg in so short a time. But chiefly would I lay stress on the evil that may flow from the displeasure of the Head of the Church."

"And should he read the late exploit with severity, reverend Prior, what are we to look to, as its fruits?"

"To be denounced as excluded from the fold, and to be left to the wickedness and folly of your own hearts. In a word, excommunication."

"Umph!—this might prove a short way of recruiting the followers of Brother Luther! thou knowest, holy Arnolph, that men look more and more closely, every day, into these disputed points."

"Would that they looked with more humility and understanding! If ye consider the denunciations and benedictions of him to whom has been confided the authority to bless and to curse as of little weight, no words of mine can heighten their effect; but all among ye who are not prepared to go the length that your Burgomaster hath just hinted, may deem it prudent to pause, ere they incur the heavy risk of living under such a weight of Heaven's displeasure."

The burghers regarded each other in doubt, few among them being yet prepared to push resistance so far. Some inwardly trembled, for habit and tradition were too strong for the new opinions; some shrewdly weighed the temporal rather than the spiritual consequences; and others ruminated on the possibility of enduring the anathema in so good company. There are thousands that are willing to encounter danger in large bodies, who shrink from its hazards alone; and perhaps the soldier goes to the charge quite as much stimulated by the sympathy of association, as he is sustained by the dread of shame or the desire of renown. The civic counsellors of Duerckheim now found themselves in some such plight, and each man felt assurance or doubt, much as he happened to meet with either of those feelings expressed in the eyes of his neighbor.

"Have ye any less godly proposition to make?" asked Heinrich, who perceived that the moral part of his civic support began to waver, "for these are points in which we are better skilled than on those that touch your doctrinal niceties."

"I am commanded to say, that, as becomes their divine office, the brotherhood of Limburg is disposed to pardon and forget, inasmuch as duty will allow, the late act of Duerckheim, on conditions that may be named."

"Aye, this is Christian-like, and will meet with a ready return, in our dispositions. On our side, too, holy Prior, there is every wish to forget the past, and to look only to a quiet and friendly future—do I interpret the intentions of the town well, my neighbors?"

"To the letter!—no clerk could do it better."—"Yes, we are of the community's mind; it is wise to live at peace, and to pardon and overlook;" were ready answers to this appeal.

"Thou hearest, Father! a better mood no minister or messenger need wish! 'Fore Heaven! we are all of one mind in this particular; and I know not that the man would find safety in Duerckheim who should talk of aught but peace!"

"It is to be mourned that ye have not always been of this humor; I come not, however, to reproach, but to reclaim; not to defy, but to persuade; not to intimidate, but to convince. Here are the written proposi-

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tions of the holy divines by whom I am charged with this office of mediator, and I leave it for a time to your private consultations. When ye shall have well digested this fit offer, I will come among ye in peace and friendliness."

The written proposals were received, and the whole assembly rose to do the Prior honor. As the latter left the hall, he asked permission of several of the burghers, among whom was Heiurich Frey, to visit their families, in the spirit of Christian guardianship. The desired consents were obtained without demur or doubt, on the part of any; for whatever may be said or thought of the errors of public opinion, it is usually right where the means are possessed of at all giving it a true direction. The high estimation in which Arnolph was held, by the mere force of popular instinct, was never more plainly seen than on the present occasion, when even those who had so lately warred against the community, threw open their doors without reserve; though it was well known that the late policy of the town had many a secret enemy, and many a bitter commentator, in that sex which is sometimes as slow to incite to violence and resistance, as at others it is thoughtless and hasty.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"What well-appointed leader fronts us here?"
—*King Henry IV.*

The missive of the monks was written in Latin. At that period few wrote but the learned, and every noble or town was obliged to maintain a scholar to perform what are now the commonest duties of intercourse. The clerkly agent of Duerckheim had been educated for the Church, and had even received the tonsure; but some irregularities of life, which, as it would appear, were not within the pale of clerical privileges, or which had been so unguarded as to bring scandal on the profession, compelled him to give his destinies a new direction. As happens with most men who have expended much time and labor in qualifying themselves for any particular pursuit, and who are unexpectedly driven from its exercise, this individual, who was named Ludwig, and who was often ironically styled in common parlance Father Ludwig, never completely succeeded in repairing the injury done by the first false step he had made. His acquirement procured for him a certain amount of consideration, but as he was known to be somewhat free in his manner of life, and, especially as schism grew strong in Germany, a bold skeptic on most of the distinctive doctrines of the Catholic Church, he ever wore about his character some of that fancied looseness which insensibly attaches itself to all renegades, whether their motives be more or less corrupt. Still, as he was known to be instructed, the multitude ascribed more virtue to his secession than it would have imputed to the withdrawal from the fold of fifty sincere believers; for most believed there were means of judging that belonged to the initiated, which did not fall to the lot of those who worshipped in the outer court. We have daily proofs that this weakness reaches into the temporal interests of life, and that opinions are valued in proportion as there is believed to be some secret means of acquiring information; though men rarely conceal anything that they know which may be revealed, and few indeed are disposed to "hide their lights under a bushel."

Ludwig forgot no part of the intonation or emphasis, while he uttered the unintelligible phrases of the monkish missive. His auditors listened the more attentively, because they did not understand a syllable of what was said; attention seeming usually to be riveted in an inverse ratio to the facilities of comprehension. Perhaps some of the higher dignitaries flattered themselves that their inferiors might be duped into the belief of their attainments; a fact that could not fail to increase their influence, since there is no better evidence of the innate aspirations of our intellectual being than the universal deference that is paid to knowledge. We have hazarded this supposition against the civic authorities of Duerckheim, because we believe it depends upon a general principle of human ambition; and because in our own case, we well remember hearing out a sermon of more than an hour's duration, delivered in Low Dutch, and in a damp church in Holland, when not a word, from the text to the benediction, was understood.

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"Right learnedly worded, and no doubt of proper courtesy!" exclaimed Heinrich, when the letter was ended, and while the clerk was clearing his spectacles, preparatory to the more vulgar version.—"It is a happy strife, neighbors, in which such language passes between the parties; for it proves that charity is stronger than malice, and that reason is not forgotten merely because there have been blows!"

"I have rarely heard braver words," answered a fellow-burgher, "or those that are better penned!"

"Potz-tausend!" muttered the smith; "it were almost a sin to dispossess men that can write thus!"

Murmurs of approbation passed through the crowd, and not an individual was there, with the solitary exception of a gaping idiot that had stolen into the hall, who did not affect to have received more or less pleasure from the communication. Even the idiot had his share of satisfaction, for, by the pure force of sympathy, he caught gleamings of a delight that seemed so strong and so general

Ludwig now commenced translating the letter into the harsh, energetic German of the Rhine. The wonderful capabilities of the language enabled him to convert the generalities and comprehensive terms of the Latin, with a minuteness of signification, which put the loss of any shade of idea utterly out of the question.

What the monks had meant, and perhaps even more, was laboriously, and with malignant pleasure, rendered; and so rendered as to give to each expression the fullest weight and meaning.

We have no intention of attempting the office of translating this harsh summons ourselves, but must be content with a brief summary of its contents. The instrument opened with a greeting that was not unlike those which were sent, in the first ages of the present dispensation, from the apostles to the churches of the east. It then contained a short but pointed narrative of the recent events, which were qualified in a way that the reader can easily imagine; it proceeded to refer to the spiritual and temporal authorities from which the brotherhood had assurances of support; and it concluded by demanding, under the penalty of incurring every earthly and heavenly risk, an enormous sum in gold, as a pecuniary reparation for the injury done—a complete and absolute submission of the town to the jurisdiction of the community, even more than was ever before pretended to—a public and general acknowledgment of error, with a variety of penances and pilgrimages to be performed by functionaries that were named—and the delivery of Heinrich Frey, with eleven others of the principal inhabitants, into the Abbot's hands as hostages, until all of these exactions and conditions should be completely and satisfactory fulfilled.

"Wh—e—e—e—w!" whistled Heinrich, when Ludwig ended, after a most provoking prolixity, that had completely exhausted the Burgomaster's patience. "Himmel! here is a victory that is likely to cost us our means, our characters, our liberties, our consciences, and our ease! Are the monks mad, Master Ludwig, or art thou sporting with our credulity:—Do they really speak of hostages, and of gold?"

"Of a surety, worshipful Herr, and seemingly with a right good will."

"Wilt read the part touching the hostages again, in the Latin; thou mayest have indiscreetly overlooked a conjunction or a pronoun, as I think thou callest these notable figures of speech."

"Aye, it were well to judge of the letter by the Latin," echoed the smith; "one never knows the quality of his metal, at the first touch of the hammer."

Ludwig read, a second time, extracts in the original, and, through a species of waggery, by which he often took a secret and consolatory revenge for the indignities he frequently received from the ignorant, and which served him as food for merriment and as a vent to his confined humors in occasional interviews with others of his own class, he gave with singular emphasis the terms of greeting, which were, as usual, embellished with phrases of priestly benediction, as the part that especially demanded the prompt delivery of Heinrich Frey and his fellows into the hands of the Benedictines.

"Gott bewahre!" cried the Burgomaster, who had shifted a leg each time the clerk glanced an eye at him over his spectacles—

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"I have other concerns than to sit in a cell, and Duerckheim would fare but badly were the town left without so large a share of its knowledge and experience. Prithee, Master Ludwig, give us the kinder language of these Benedictines; for methinks there may be found some words of peace in the blessings they bestow."

The crafty clerk now read, in the original, the strongest of the denunciations, and the parts of the letter which so peremptorily demanded the hostages.

"How now, knave!" said the hasty Burgomaster, "thou hast not been faithful in thy former readings. Thou hearest, neighbors, I am named especially in their benedictions; for you must know, worthy burghers, that Henricus means Heinrich, and Frey well pronounced, is much the same in all languages. This I know from long experience in these cunning instruments. I owe the reverend Benedictines grace for their good wishes, expressed with this particularity; though the manner in which they introduce the hostages is unseemly."

"I thought when it came to the worst," muttered the smith, "that Master Heinrich would be considered with especial favor. This it is, brother artisans, to be honored in one's town, and to have a name!"

"There sounds a parley!" interrupted the Burgomaster. "Can these crafty monks have dared to trifle with us, by sending the choicest of their flock to hold us in discourse, while they steal upon us in armor?"

The idea was evidently unpleasant to most of the council, and to none more so than to the aged Wolfgang, whose years would seem to have given less value to his personal safety than to the rest. Many quitted the hall, while those that remained appeared to be detained more by their apprehensions than by their fortitude. Heinrich, who was constitutionally firm, continued the most undisturbed of them all, though even he went from window to window like a man that was uneasy.

"If the godly villains have done this treachery, let them look to it—we are not vassals to be hoodwinked with a cowl!"

"Perhaps, worshipful and wise Heinrich," said the crafty Ludwig, "they send the trumpet, in readiness to receive the hostages."

"The holy Magi curse them, and their impudent long-winded musician!—How now, fellow!—who maketh this tan—ta—ra—ra at our gate?"

"The noble Count of Hartenburg is at the valley side of the town, honorable Burgomaster, with a stout troop of mounted followers," announced the breathless runner who came on this errand. "He chafes at the delay, but as the order to keep fast is so rigid, the captain of the watch dares not unbar and unbolt without permission had."

"Bid the valiant and faithful burgher undo his fastenings, o' Heaven's name!—and right speedily. We should have bethought us, excellent neighbors, of the chances of this visit, and had a care that our princely friend were without this cause of complaint. But we should rejoice, too, that our people are so true, as to keep their trust even against one so known and honored. I warrant ye, neighbors, were it the imperial Karl himself, he would fare no better——"

Heinrich was interrupted while vaunting and extolling the civic discipline, by the tramping of horses' feet on the pavement below the windows, and on looking out he saw Emich and all his cortege coolly alighting.

"Umph!" ejaculated the Burgomaster—"go forth, and do reverence to my Lord the Count."

The council awaited in deep silence the appearance of their visitor. Emich entered the hall with the assured step of a superior, and with a countenance that was clouded. He bowed to the salutations of the council, signed for his armed followers to await at the door, and walked himself to the seat which Heinrich had previously vacated, and which in truth was virtually the throne of Duerckheim. Placing his heavy form in the chair, with the air of one accustomed to fill it, he again bowed, and made a gesture of the hand, which the burghers understood to be an invitation to be seated. With doubting faces the awed authorities submitted, receiving that permission as a boon, which they were ready so lately themselves to urge as a civility. Heinrich looked surprised, but, accustomed to pay great deference to his noble friend, he returned the bow and smile—for he was especially saluted with a smile—and took the second place.

"It was not well, my worthy townsmen, to

close your gates thus churlishly against me," commenced the baron; "there are rights and honors that ought to be respected, at all hours and seasons, and I marvel that this need be taught to the Duerckheimers by a Count of Leiningen. I and my train were held at parlance at your barriers, an' we had been so many wandering gypsies, or some of the free bands that sell their arquebuses and lances to the highest bidder!"

"That there may have been som little delay, my Lord Count ——" answered Heinrich.

"Little, Burgomaster! dost thou call that little which keeps a noble of Leiningen chafing at a gate, amid dust and heat, and gaping mouths? Thou knowest not the spirit of our steeds, Herr Frey, if thou imaginest they like such sudden checks of the curb. We are of high mettle, horses and riders, and must have our way when fairly spurred!"

"There was every desire, nobly born Emich, to do you honor, and to undo our bolts as speedily as might be done; for this end we were about to depute the necessary orders, when we were suddenly favored with your gracious and high dispensing company. We doubt not that the captain of the watch reasoned with himself, and did that, of good intention and of his own accord, which he would speedily have been called upon to do, by our commands."

"God's truth! that may not prove so true," answered Emich, laughing. "Our impatience was stronger than your bolts, and lest the same oversight might renew the inconvenience, we found means to enter with little formality."

The burghers in general seemed greatly troubled, and Heinrich as greatly surprised. The baron saw that enough had been said for the moment; and assuming a more gracious mien, he continued in another strain.

"Well, loving townsmen," he said, "it is now a happy week, since all our desires have been accomplished. The Benedictines are defeated, the Jaegerthal is at peace and under the sway of its rightful lord, and yet the sun rises and sets as before, the heavens seem as smiling, the rains as refreshing, and all our hopes as reasonable as of old! There is to be no miracle in their behalf, Herr Heinrich, and we may fain sleep in peace."

"That may depend, Lord Count, on other humors than ours. Here are reports abroad that are anything but pleasant to the ear, and our honest townsmen are troubled lest, after doing good service in behalf of their betters, they may yet be made to pay all the charges of the victory."

"Set their hearts at peace, worthy Burgomaster, for I have not thrust a hand into the ecclesiastical flame, without thought of keeping it from being scorched. Thou knowest I have friends, and 'twill not be easy to put a Count of Leiningen to the ban."

"Nay, we doubt but little, illustrious noble, of your safety, and of your house's; our fear is for ourselves."

"Thou hast only to lean on me, Master Frey. When the tie between us shall be explained more clearly to the Emperor and the Diet, and when our loving wishes, as respects each other, shall be better understood, all will know that to strike Duerckheim is to aim a blow at me. Whence cometh this sudden fear, for last reports touching your condition said that the town was firm of heart, and bent on joining Luther, rather than confess?"

"Sapperment! the heart must not always be judged by the countenance! Here is the smith, who is seldom of a bright visage, but were it said that his heart is as black as his face, great injustice would be done the man."

A movement and a murmur betrayed the admiration of those who crowded the door, at this figure of the Burgomaster.

"Thou hast some reason for this sudden despondency?" rejoined the Count, glancing a look of indifference at the artisans.

"Why, to speak the truth, Lord Emich, Bonifacius hath sent us a missive, written in very fair Latin, and in a scholarly manner, that threatens us to a man with every Christian wish, from plagues to downright incurable damnation."

"And art thou troubled, Heinrich, at a scrawl of unintelligible words?"

"I know not what is to be understood, Herr Count, if a demand for Heinrich Frey, with eleven others of our most respected, as hostages, doubtless to be kept from their affairs in some convent cells, on hard fare, and hard penance, for weary months, be not plain! To this they add demands for gold, with pilgrimages, and penances, and other godly recreations."

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"By whose hand got ye this?"

"By that of the honest Prior, a man of so much bowels, that I marvel he should be the bearer of a message so unwelcome and so uncharitable. But the best of us have our moments of weakness, for all are not always thoughtful or just."

"Ha! Arnolph is afoot!—Hath he departed?"

"He tarries, my good lord; for look you, we have not yet determined on the fashion of our reply."

"Thou wouldst not have thought of sending answer, without taking counsel of me, Herr Frey!" said Emich, sharply, and much in the manner that a parent reproves his child. "I am luckily arrived, and the matter shall be looked to. Have ye bethought ye of the fitting terms?"

"No doubt all have bethought them much, though as yet, none have uttered their secret opinions. For one, I cry out loudly against all hostages, though none could be readier than I to undergo this risk to serve the town; but it is admitting an error in too plain evidence, and carrieth with it a confession that our faith is not to be depended on."

This sentiment, which had long been struggling in Heinrich's breast, met with an audible echo in that of everyone of the eleven who were likely, by situation and years, to be chosen for this honorable distinction; and every man among them uttered some proper phrase concerning the value of character, and the necessity of so demeaning themselves, as not to cheapen that of Duerckheim. Emich listened coolly, for it was of great indifference to him how much the burghers were alarmed, since their fears could only induce them the more to seek support from his interest and power.

"Thou hast then refused the conditions?"

"We have done nothing, Herr Count, but we have thought much and sorely, as hath just been said. I take it, the gold and the hostages will find but little favor among us; but, rather than keep the Palatinate in a disturbed and insecure state, and as we are quiet burghers, who look to peace and the means of getting their bread, our answer may not be so short, could the matter be brought down to a few chosen penitents and pilgrimages. Though half of Brother Luther's mind in many things, it were well to get quit of even the chances of damnation, for a few sore feet and stripes, that might be so managed as to do little civic harm."

"By the lineage of my house!" exclaimed Heinrich, thou dost but echo my thoughts. The Prior is a man with bowels, and this matter shall be speedily arranged. We must bethink us of the details, for these monks are close calculators, and on a time are said to have outwitted Lucifer. First then, there shall be an offering of gold."

"Nay, my Lord Count will consider the means of our town!"

"Peace, honest Heinrich," whispered Emich, leaning toward the place where the Burgomaster and two or three of the principal members of the council sat—"We have accounts from the Hebrews at Koeln, which say the Limburg treasures may be well applied, in this manner, to purchase a little peace. We will be liberal as becomes our names," he now spoke to all, "and not send the brotherhood naked into a world, which is getting every day less disposed to clothe them; we must drain our coffers rather than they should starve, and this point may be looked upon as settled. As for our penitents and pilgrims, the castle and the town shall equally furnish a share. I can send the lieutenant of my men-at-arms, who hath a nimble foot—Gottlob the cowherd, to whom punishment is fairly due, on many general accounts—and others doubtless that may be found. What good, of this nature, can Duerckheim supply?"

"We are a homely people, high-born Graf, and having fewer virtues than our betters, are not so well gifted either in vices. As becometh a middle state, we are content with no great excess in the one or the other of the more striking qualities; and yet I doubt not, neighbors, that at need there might be among us men who would not fare the worse for wholesome correction and fitting penances?"

Heinrich looked about him, in an inquiring manner, while each burgher passed the investigation on to the next, as men forward a glance that they wish to think has no application to themselves. The crowd at the door recoiled a pace, and heads were turned curiously, and eyes roamed among the infe-

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riors, with quite as much expression as had just been done by their superiors.

"There are delinquents, young and thoughtless varlets, who vex the town with their ribaldry and noise, that it might do to scourge with the Church's rod,"—suggested the tremulous and aged Wolfgang.

"St. Bendict will be put off with none of these," bluffly answered the Burgomaster; "he must have men of substance and of some esteem, or the affair will be as far as ever from a happy conclusion. What thinkest thou, honest and patriotic Dietrich?—Thou hast a constitution to endure, and a heart of iron."

"Tausend sex und zwanzig!" returned the smith; "you little know all my ailings, most worshipful masters, if you think I am near this force! I have difficulties of breath, that are only at peace near the heat of the forge, and my heart gets soft as a feather on a journey. Then there is the wife and the young to wail my absence, and I am not scholar enough to repeat a prayer more than some six or ten times in a day."

This excuse did not appear to satisfy the council, who, acting on that principle of exaction which is found among all people and in all communities, felt disposed to recollect the former services of the artisan, as a sort of apology for further claims on his exertions.

"Nay, for one that hath ever been so free at the wish of Duerckheim, this plea cometh with an ill grace," answered Heinrich,—a sentiment that was audibly repeated in a general exclamation of discontent by all the other burghers.—"We expected other reply from thee!"

"Well, since the worshipful council expects—but there will be the wife and the young, with none to care for them!"

"That difficulty may be disposed of—thou hast six, if I remember, in thy household?"

"Ten, honorable Heinrich—not a mouth less than half a score, and all of an age to require much food and strong."

"Here are all but two of our dozen, in a word, noble Emich," promptly added the Burgomaster; "and of a scriptural quality, for we are told, the prayers and sacrifices of the young and innocent are acceptable. Thanks, honest smith, and more than thanks: thou shalt have marks of a quality different from those left by the scourge. No doubt the others may be picked up among the useless and idle."

"Our affairs seem settled, loving burghers," answered the Count. "Leave me to dispose of the question of indemnity, and look ye to the penitents, and to the seemliness of the atonement. Ye may retire, ye that throng the way."—The mandate was hurriedly obeyed, and the door closed.—"As for support at Heidelberg and Madrid," continued the Count, "the matter hath been looked to; and should the complaint be pushed beyond decency at Rome, we have always Brother Luther as an ally. Bonifacius wanteth not for understanding, and when he looks deeper into our defences, and into the humor of the times, I know him for one that will be disposed to stay an evil, before it becomes an incurable sore. These shaven crows, Master Heinrich, are not like us fathers of families, much troubled for posterity; for they leave no name or blood behind them; and so long as we can fairly satisfy their present longings, the truce may be considered as more than half concluded. To strip a churchman of his hoardings, needeth but a bold spirit, a present bribe, and strong hand."

The whole council murmured its approval of this reasoning, and the discussion now took a turn more inclining to the details.

Emich grew gracious, and the burghers bolder. Some even laughed openly at their late apprehensions, and nearly all thought they saw a final settlement of this long-disputed and serious question. The Prior, who had been engaged in visits of religious charity in the town, was soon summoned, and the Count assumed the office of communicating the common answer.

The meeting between Emich and Father Arnolph was characteristic. It took place in the public hall, and in the presence of a few of the principal burghers. The Count was at first disposed to be haughty, imperious, and even repulsive; but the Monk was meek, earnest, and calm. The effect of this forbearance was quickly apparent. Their intercourse soon grew more courteous, for Emich, when not excited, or misled by the cupidity that disgraced the age, possessed most of the breeding of his peers. On the

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other hand, Arnolph never lost sight of his duties, the chiefest of which he believed to be charity.

"Thou art the bearer of the olive branch, holy Prior," said the Count, as they took their seats, after some little previous parley; "and pity 'tis, that all who wear the cowl, did not as well comprehend the pleasantest quality of their sacred characters. The world would grow less quarrelsome, and we who worship in the court of the temple, would be less disturbed by doubts touching those who lift its veil."

"I did not look to hold discussion of clerkly duties with thee, Lord Count, when my superior sent me on this errand to the town of Duerckheim," mildly answered the monk, indifferent to the other's wily compliments. "Am I, then, to consider the castle and the council as one?"

"In heart, humor, and interests;—I might add also, in rights and sovereignty; for, now all question of the Abbey is settled, the ancient temporal rule is replaced.—Say I well, loving burghers?"

"Umph!" ejaculated Heinrich. The rest bent their heads, though doubtingly, like men taken by surprise. But Emich seemed perfectly satisfied.

"It is of no great moment who governs here, since the wrong done to God and our brotherhood must be repaired by those who have committed it. Hast thou examined the missive of the Abbey, Herr Burgomaster, and art ready with the reply?"

"This duty hath been done, reverened Arnolph, and here is our answer. As for the letter, it is our mature opinion, that it hath been indited in a fair hand, and in very learned Latin, as befitteth a brotherhood of so much repute. We deem this more creditable, since there have been some late heavy losses in books, and he who did this might not have the customary aid of materials to which use had made him familiar. As for what hath been said in the way of greeting and benedictions, holy Prior, we are thankful, and most especially for the part that is of thy share, which we esteem to be of particular unction; in mine own behalf, especially would I thank all of the convent for the manner in which my name hath been introduced into their good wishes; though I must add, it were better that he who wrote had been content to stop there, since these frequent introductions of private personages, in matters of general concernment, are apt to raise envy and other evil passions. As respecting, moreover, any especial pilgrimages and penances in my own person, I feel not the occasion, as would doubtless be the fact at need, since we see most men pricked on to these mortifications by their own consciences."

"The expiation is not sought for particular consolation, neither is it desired as a balm to the Convent's wounds, but as an humble and a necessary atonement to God. In this view have we deemed it important to choose those who are most esteemed among men, since it is before the eyes of mankind that the expiation must be made. I am the bearer of similar proposals to the Castle, and, by high ecclesiastical authority, am I charged to demand that its well-born lord, himself, make these acknowledgments in his own person. The sacrifice of the honored and innocent hath more flavor than that of the mean and wicked."

"Potz Tausend!" muttered Heinrich.—"I see little use for leading a clean life with such doctrines and discipline!"

But Emich heard the proposal without a frown. Bold, haughty, and audacious, he was also deeply artful and superstitious. For years, his rude mind had been tormented by conflicting passions—those of cupidity and religious dread; and now that the former was satisfied, he had begun to reflect seriously of appeasing his latent apprehensions in some effectual manner. Plans of various expiatory offerings had already crossed his mind, and so far from hearing the declaration of the Benedictine with resentment, he entertained the idea with pleasure. It seemed an easy and cheap expedient of satisfying all scruples; for the re-establishment of the community on the hill of Limburg was a condition he knew to be entirely out of the question, in the present state of the public mind in Germany. In this humor, then, did he reply. The conference of course proceeded harmoniously, and it was protracted for several hours. But as its results will be more regularly developed in the course of the narrative, we shall not anticipate events.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

"In a strange land
Such things, however trival, reach the heart,
And through the heart the head, clearing away
The narrow notions that grew up at home,
And in their place grafting good-will to all."
—Rogers.

It is necessary to advance a few weeks in the order of time; a change that will bring us to the middle of the warm and generous month of July. The hour was towards the close of day, and the place and scenery such as it is now our duty to describe.

Let the reader imagine a high naked down, whose surface was slightly broken by irregularities. Scarce a tree was visible over the whole of its bold face, though a few stunted shrubs betrayed the efforts of the earth to push forth a meagre vegetation. The air was pure, thin, and volatile, and, together with the soft blue of the void, denoted a great elevation above the vapors and impurities which linger nearer to regions that lie on the level of the sea. Notwithstanding these never-failing signs of a mountain country, here and there were to be seen distant peaks, that shot upward into the fierce light, glittering with everlasting frost. Along one side of this naked expanse, the land fell suddenly away, towards a long, narrow sheet of water, which lay a thousand feet below. The shores of this lake, for such it was, were clothed with innumerable white dwellings, and garnished with hamlets and vineyards, while a walled town, with its towers and battlements, occasionally darkened the shores. But these were objects scarcely to be seen, from the precise situation which we desire the mind of the reader to occupy. In the distant view, always in that direction, one favorably placed might have seen the vast range of undulating country, stretching towards the north and east, that had the usual characteristics of a region in which Alpine mountains begin gradually to melt into the plain. This region was beautified with several spots of dark blue, resembling so many deep reflections of the skies, which were sheets of limpid and tranquil water. Towards the south and west, the down was bounded by a natural wall of rude and gray rock, that rose, in nearly all its line, to the elevation of a mountain, and which shot up to a giddy height, near its centre, in two pointed cones, that, by their forms, coupled with other circumstances that shall be soon explained, had obtained the name of the "Mitres."

Near the barrier of mountain, and almost directly beneath these natural mitres, was a small village, whose houses, constructed of wood, had the wide roof, numerous windows, and the peculiar resin-like color of Swiss habitations.

The place was a hamlet, rather than a village, and most of the land around it lay at waste, like all that was visible for miles, in every direction. On a rising ground near the hamlet, from which it was separated merely by a large esplanade, or green, as we should be apt to turn the spot, stood one of those mazes of roofs, chimneys, and towers, which in that age, and indeed, even now, mark a conventual pile. The edifices were large, complicated in their forms and order, and had been constructed without much architectural knowledge or taste; the air of the whole being that of rude but abundant wealth. In the centre was a church, or chapel, evidently of ancient existence and simple origin, though its quaint outlines were elaborately decorated, after the fashion of the times, by a variety of after-thoughts, in a manner to show that means were not wanting to render the whole more magnificent, and that the fault of the construction lay rather in the first idea, than in any subsequent ability or inclination to repair it.

The site of this hamlet and down was in the celebrated Canton of Schwytz, a small district that has since given its name to the heroic confederation that occupies so much of the country among and near the Western Alps. Its name was Einsiedeln; the monastic buildings belonged to a convent of Benedictines, and the church contained one of the shrines even then most in repute, after that of Loretto. Time and revolutions have since elevated our Lady of Einsiedeln, perhaps, to the very highest rank among the pilgrimages of the Catholic; for we have lately seen thousands crowding her altars, while we found the Santa Casa abandoned chiefly to the care of its guardians, or subject to the casual inspection of curious heretics.

Having thus described the spot to which

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the scene is shifted, it is proper to refer to the actors.

At a point distant less than a league from the hamlet, and on the side of the open down just mentioned, which lies next to the steep ascent from the lake of Zurich, and in the direction of the Rhine, there came a group of travellers of both sexes, and apparently of all ages between declining manhood and vigorous youth. They were afoot, wearing the garb and symbols of pilgrims. Weariness had caused them to lengthen their line, and they went in pairs, the strongest in front, the feeble and more fatigued in the rear.

In advance marched two men. One wore the gown and cowl of a Benedictine, while he carried, like the rest, the staff and wallet of a pilgrim. His companion had the usual mantle decorated with scollop shells, and also bore his scrip and stick. The others had the same attire, with the usual exceptions that distinguish the sexes. They consisted of two men of middle age, who followed those in front; two of each sex in pairs, all still young and active; two females, who were in their prime, though wearied and sad; and a maiden, who dragged her limbs after them with a difficulty disproportioned to her years. At the side of the latter was a crone, whose infirmities and age had enabled her to obtain the indulgence of an ass, on which she was seated comparatively at her ease; though, by a license that had been winked at by the monk, her saddle was encumbered with the scrips of most of the female penitents. In the rear of all came two males, who seemed to form a sort of rear guard to the whole party.

This group was composed of the Prior and Emich, who led the van; of Heinrich, and Dietrich, the smith; of Gisela and Gottlob, with a youth and maiden from Duerckheim; of Ulrike and Lottchen, of Meta and Ilse, and of M. Latouche and the Knight of Rhodes. These were the penitents chosen to expiate the late offence to the majesty of God, by prayers and mortifications before the shrine of Einsiedeln. The temporal question had been partially put at rest, by the intrigues and influence of the Count, backed, as he was, by timely applications of gold, and by the increasing heresy that had effectually shaken the authority of the Church throughout all Germany, and which had sufficiently apprised the practised Bonifacius, and his superiors, of the expediency of using great moderation in their demands.

"St. Benedict make us thankful, holy Father!" said the Count, as his gratified eye first beheld the long-wished-for roofs of the Convent.—"We have journeyed a weary distance; and this snail's pace, which, in deference to the weak, we are bound to observe, but little suits the impatience of a warrior accustomed to steed and spur. Thou hast often visited this sacred shrine, pious Arnolph?"

The monk had stopped, and with a tearful eye he stood gazing, in religious reverence, at the distant pile. Then kneeling on the grass, he prayed, while the others, accustomed to these sudden demonstrations of zeal, gladly rested their limbs, the while.

"Never before hath eye of mine greeted yon holy pile," answered the Prior, as they slowly resumed their journey; "though often, in night dreams, hath my soul yearned for the privilege!"

"Methinks, Father, thou hast little occasion for penitence or pilgrimage:—thou, whose life hath rolled on in deeds of Christian charity and love."

"Each day brings its evil, and each day should have its expiation."

"Truly, not in marches over stony and mountain paths, like these we travel. Einsiedeln must have especial virtue, to draw men so far from their homes to do it honor. Hast the history of the shrine at command, reverend Prior?"

"It should be known to all Christians, and chiefly to the pilgrim. I had thought thee instructed in these great events!"

"By the Magi!—to speak thee honestly, Father Arnolph, the little friendship which hath subsisted between Limburg and my house, had given a disrelish for any Benedictine miracle, let it be of what quality it would; but now that we are likely to be so lovingly united, I could gladly hear the tale, which will at least serve to divert our thoughts from a subject so grovelling as our own feet; for to conceal nothing, mine make most importunate appeals to be at rest!"

"Our journey draweth near its end; but,

as thy request is reasonable, it shall be answered. Listen, then, Emich, and may the lesson profit thy soul! During the reign of the illustrious and warlike Charlemagne, who governed Gaul, with so much of our Germany and the country of the Franks, there lived a youth of the ancient family of Hohenzollern, branches of which still possess principalities and marches in the empire. The name of this learned and pious youth was Meinard. Early fatigued with the vanities of life, he sought a hermitage, nearer than this to the banks of that lake which we so lately crossed at Rapperschwyl. But, overburdened by the number of the curious and pious who visited his cell, the holy Meinard, after seven years of prayer, retired to a clear fountain, which must still run near yonder church, where another cell and a chapel were built for him, expressly by command of Hildegarde, a royal lady, and the Abbess of a monastery in the town of Zurich. Here Meinard lived and here he died, filled with grace, and greatly blessed by godly exercises."

"Father, had he a profitable and happy end, in this wild region?"

"Spiritually, nothing could have been more desirable; temporally, naught more foul. He died by the hands of vile assassins, to whom he had rendered hospitality. The deed was discovered by means of two crows, who followed the murderers to Zurich, where they were taken and executed—at least, so sayeth tradition. In a later age, the holy Meinard was canonized by Benedict VIII. For nearly half a century, the cell of Meinard, though in great request as a place of prayer, remained without a tenant; but at the end of that period, Beurun, a canon of the house of Burgundy, which house then ruled most of the country far and near, caused the chapel and cell to be repaired, replaced the image of the blessed Maria, and devoted his own life to the hermitage. The neighboring Seigneurs and Barons contributed to endow the place, and divers holy men joined themselves to the service of the altar, from which circumstance the shrine obtained the name of our 'Lady of the Hermits,' its true appellation to this hour. It would weary thee to listen to the tale of miracles performed in virtue of their prayers, even in that early and less gifted condition of the place; but its reputation so circulated that many came from afar to see and to believe. In the process of time, a regular community was established, and the church thou seest was erected, containing in its nave the original cell, chapel, and image of Saint Meinard. Of the brotherhood, Saint Eberhaud was named the Abbot."

"I had thought there was still higher virtue in the place!" observed Emich, when the Prior paused, and seemingly a little disappointed; for your deep sinner as little likes a simple dispensation, as the drunkard relishes small drinks.

"Thou shalt hear. When the buildings were completed, and it became necessary to consecrate the place, agreeably to the forms and usages of the Church, Conrad Bishop of Constance was invited to discharge the holy office. Here cometh the wonderful favor of Heaven! As Conrad of Constance, with other pious men, arose to pray, at midnight of the day appointed for the service, they suddenly heard divine music most sweetly chanted by angels. Though sore amazed and impressed, they were still sufficiently masters of their reason to discover that the unseen beings sang the prescribed formula of the consecration, that office which they were preparing themselves to perform a few hours later. Satisfied with this especial and wonderful interference, Conrad would have abstained from repeating a service which had already been thus performed, but for the demands and outcries of the ignorant. But when, after hours of delay, he was about to yield to their impatience, a clear voice three times admonished him of the blasphemy, by saying, 'Cease, brother! thy chapel is divinely consecrated!' From that moment the place is so esteemed, and all our rites are performed as at a shrine of high behest and particular virtue."

Emich crossed himself devoutly, having listened in perfect faith, and with deep interest;—for at that moment early impressions were stronger than the modern doubts.

"It is good to be here, father," he reverently answered; "I would that Ermengarde, and all of my house, were at my side! But are there any especial favors accorded to those who come hither, in a fitting temper,

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in the way of temporal gifts or political considerations; since, being before a shrine so holy, I could fain profit by the sore pains and privations by which the grace is gained?"

The Prior seemed mortified, for, though he lent the faith required by the opinions of the age to the tradition he had recounted, he was too well instructed in the true doctrines of his Church not to perceive the false bias of his companion's mind. The embarrassment caused a silence, during which the reader is to imagine that they passed on, giving place to other personages of the tale.

Before turning to another group, however, we desire to say distinctly, that, in relating the manner of the miraculous consecration of the chapel of 'Our Lady of the Hermits,' we have wished merely to set the tradition before the reader without inferring aught for, or against, its authenticity. It is well known that the belief of these supernatural interferences of Divine Power forms no necessary part of doctrine, even in that Church which is said to be the most favored of these dispensations; and it ought always to be remembered that those sects which impugn these visible and physical signs of Omnipotence, entertain opinions of a more purely spiritual character, that are scarcely less out of the course of ordinary and vulgar nature. In cases in which there exist so nice shades of distinction, and in which truth is so difficult of discovery, it is our duty to limit ourselves to popular facts, and as such have we given the history of Einsiedeln, its Abbey, and its Virgin. The opinion of Father Arnolph is the local opinion of our own times, and it is the opinion of thousands who, even now, yearly frequent the shrine.

Heinrich and the smith were the couple next to the Count and the Prior, and of course they were the next to cross the stage.

"It is no doubt much, or I may add altogether as you say, Worshipful Burgomaster——"

"Brother Pilgrim," ruefully interrupted Heinrich.

"I should have said, Brother Worshipful Pilgrim,—though, Heaven it knows, the familiarity goes nigh to choke me!—but it is much as you say, that whether we cling to Rome, or finally settle quietly into the new worship of Brother Luther, this journey ought, in all fairness, to be set down to our account, as of so much virtue; for, look you, Brother Worshipful, it is made at the cost of Christian flesh and blood, and therefore should it be savory, without much particularity concerning mere outward appearances. I do not think, were truth spoken, that wielding the sledge a twelve-month would have done this injury to my feet!"

'Have mercy on thyself and me, good smith, and think less of these trifling grievances. What Heaven wills must happen, else would one of thy merit have risen higher in the world."

"Thanks, Worshipful Brother Pilgrim and Burgomaster; I will bethink me of resignation, though these wire-drawn pains are never to the liking of your men of muscle and great courage. A knock o' the head, or the bullet of an arquebuse gives less uneasiness than smaller griefs much endured. Were things properly governed, the penances and pilgrimages, and other expiations of the Church, would be chiefly left to the women."

"We shall see hereafter how Luther hath ordered this; but having ourselves embarked in this journey for the good of Duerckheim, to say nothing of our own souls, it behooveth us to hold out manfully;—a duty the more easily performed, as we can now see the end of it. To speak thee fair, Dietrich, I do not remember ever to have beheld Benedictine abode with so much joy as this we see at yonder mountain's foot!"

"Be of cheer, most honorable and excellent Brother Worshipful Pilgrim; the trial is near its end, and if we come thus far to do this honor to our own community, why,—Himmel! it is but the price paid for getting rid of another!"

"Be of cheer, truly, brother smith, for it is but some kneeling, and a few stripes that each is to apply to his own back; after which the return will reasonably be more joyous than the advance."

Encouraged by each other, the devotees hobbled on, their heavy massive frames yielding at every step, like those of overgrown oxen which had been but indifferently shod. As they passed by, their places were filled by the four, of whom Gisela and Gottlob formed a part. Among these the discourse was light and trifling, for bodily fatigue had little in-

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fluence on the joyous buoyancy of such spirits; especially at a moment when they saw before them the immediate termination of their troubles. Not so with those that came next; these were Ulrike and her friend, who moved along the path, like those who were loaded with griefs of the soul.

"God is among these hills, as he is on our plains, Lottchen!" said the former, continuing the discourse. "Yon temple is his shrine, as was that of Limburg; and it is as vain for man to think of forgetting him on earth, as it would be to invade him in that Heaven which is His throne! What he doth is wise, and we will endeavor to submit."

The words of Ulrike were perhaps more touched with resignation than her manner. The latter, though subdued, was filled with sorrow, and her voice was tremulous nearly to tears. Though the exhibition of her melancholy was deep and evident, it was of a character which denotes no extinction of hope. On the other hand, the features, eye, and entire manner of her friend, bore the heavy and fatal impress of incurable woe.

"God is among these hills!" repeated Lottchen, though she scarce seemed to hear the words; "God is among these hills!"

"We approach a much-esteemed shrine, dearest Lottchen; the Being, in whose name it hath been raised, will not permit us to depart from it unblessed."

"We shall be blessed, Ulrike!"

"Thou dwellest hopelessly on thy loss, my Lottchen! Would thou had less thought of the past, and more of the future!"

The smile with which the widow regarded her friend was full of anguish.

"I have no future, Ulrike, but the grave!"

"Dearest Lottchen!—we will speak of this holy shrine!" Emotion smothered her voice.

"Speak of what thou wilt, my friend," answered the childless widow, with a frightful calm. "I see no difference in subjects."

"Lottchen!—not when we discourse of Heaven!"

The widow bowed her vacant eyes to earth, and they passed on. Their footsteps were succeeded by those of the beast ridden by Ilse, and by the faltering tread of Meta.

"Aye,—yon is the shrine of our Lady of the Hermits!" said the former; "a temple of surpassing virtue! Well, Heaven is not in churches and chapels, and that of Limburg may yet be spared; the more especially as the brotherhood was far from being of unexceptionable lives. Keep up thy heart, Meta, and think not of weariness, for not a pain dost thou now bear that will not be returned to thee, another day, in joy, or in some other precious gift. This is Heaven's justice, which is certain to requite all equally, for good or evil. Well-a-day!—it is this certainty that comforteth the godly, and giveth courage to the tottering."

She spoke to an insensible listener. The countenance of Meta, like that of Lottchen, expressed hopelessness, though it were in less palpable and certain signs. The eye was dull but wandering, the cheek pale, the mouth convulsive and at times compressed, the step languid, and the whole being of this young and innocent creature seemed wasting under a premature and unnatural blight! She looked at the convent with indifference, though it brought relief to her bodily pains. The mountains rose dark and rugged near, or glittered in the distance like hills of alabaster, without giving birth to a single exclamation of that delight which these scenes are known to excite in young breasts; and even the pure void above was gazed at, though it seemed to invite to a more tranquil existence, with vacuity and indifference.

"Ah's me!" continued Ilse, whose observation rarely penetrated beyond her own feelings, and whose tongue was never known to wax weary—"Ah's me! Meta. Oh! it must be a wicked world that needs all these pilgrimages and burnings. But they are only types, child, of the past and of the future; of the 'has been,' and of the 'to come.' First, life is a pilgrimage, and a penance; though few of us think so while journeying on its way; but so it is to all; especially to the little favored—but a penance it is, by means of our ailings and other infirmities, particularly in age; and therefore do I bear with it cheerfully, since penances are to be borne; and the burnings of convents and villages are types of the burnings of the wicked. Thou dost not answer, child?"

"Dost think, nurse, that they who die by fire are blessed?"

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"Of what art speaking, Meta!—Poor Berchthold Hintermayer perished, as thou knowest, in the flames of Limburg; so did Father Johan, and so did one, far more evil than either!—Oh! I could reveal secrets, an' I had not a prudent tongue! But wisdom lieth in prudence, and I say naught; therefore, Meta, be thou silent."

"I will obey thee, nurse."

The tones of the girl trembled, and the smile with which she gladly acquiesced in the demand of Ilse was such as the sinking invalid gives the kind attendant.

"Thou art dutiful, and it is a merit. I never knew thee more obedient and less given to merriment or girlish exclamations, than on this very pilgrimage; all of which shows that thy mind is in a happy state for these holy offices. Well-a-day!—the pious Arnolph has halted, and now we are about, in sooth, to reap the virtue of all our labors. Oh! an' I had been a monk, thou wouldest have had a leader!"

Ilse beat the sides of the patient animal she rode, and Meta toiled after, as well as her trembling limbs permitted. The Knight and the Abbé came last.

"Thou hast made many of these pious expiations, reverend Abbé?" observed the former, when they had risen the hill, which commanded a view of the convent.

"Never another. Had not chance made me an innocent participator in the destruction of Limburg, this indignity would have been spared."

"How! callest thou a pilgrimage, and prayer at a shrine, an indignity?—thou, a churchman!"

"Gallant Knight, I speak to thee as to a comrade of many days, and of weary passages; as one enlightened. Thou knowest the constitution of earth, and the divers materials that compose society. We have doctrines for all; but practices must be mitigated, like medicaments to the sick. Your pilgrimage is well enough for the peasant, or the citizen, or even for your noble of the Provinces, but their merit is much questioned among us of the capitals—unless, indeed, there should mingle some hope for the future; but penance for deeds accomplished we hold to be supererogatory."

"By my rapier! no such doctrine was in vogue at Rhodes, where all ordinances were much respected, and uniformly admitted."

"And had ye then these familiar practices of religion in your daily habits, Sir Knight?"

"I say not in practice; but ever in admission. Thou knowest the distinction, Sir Abbé, between the purity of doctrine and some constructions of practice."

"That doubtless. Were we to tie the gentle down to all the observances and exactions of a severe theory, there would grow up numberless inconveniences. For myself, had it been possible to preserve the ecclesiastical character, without penance under the odium of this unhappy but accidental visit to our host the Count, I could have dispensed with the last act of the drama."

"'Tis whispered, Herr Latouche, my cousin bethought him, that the presence of an ecclesiastic might prove a cloak to his intentions, and that we owe the pleasure of thy agreeable society to a policy that is deeper than chance!"

Albrecht of Viederbach laughed, as he intimated this ruse of Emich; and his companion, who had long perceived how completely he had been the dupe of his host, for in truth he knew nothing previously of the intended assult, was fain to make the best of his situation. He laughed, in his turn, as the loose of principle make light of any misadventure that may happen to be the consequence of their laxity of morals; and, pressing each other, on their several parts in the late events, the two proceeded leisurely towards the spot where the Prior and Emich, as leaders of the party, had now come to a halt. We shall profit by the occasion to make some necessary explanations.

We are too much accustomed in this Protestant country to believe that most of the piety of those who profess the religion of Rome consists in externals. When the great antiquity of this Church shall be remembered, as well as the general tendency, in the early ages, to imitate the forms and habits of their immediate predecessors, it should not occasion surprise if some observances were retained, that cannot very clearly be referred, either to apostolic authority or to reason. The promulgation of abstract truth does not necessarily infer a departure from those practices which have become of value by use, even though

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they may not materially assist in the attainment of the great end. We have inherited many of the vestments and ceremonies which are retained in the Protestant churches, from Pagan priests; nor is there any sufficient motive for abandoning them, so long as they aid the decencies of worship, without weakening its real objects. The Pagans themselves probably derived some of these very practices from those whom we are taught to believe held direct communion with God, and who should have best known in what manner to render human adoration most acceptable to the ruler of the universe.

In this country, Catholicism, in its limited and popular meaning, is no longer catholic, since it is in so small a minority as to have no perceptible influence on the opinions or customs of the country. The outward symbols, the processions, and all the peculiar ceremonies of the Romish Church, are confined to the temples, and the eye rarely or never meets any evidence of its existence beyond their walls. But in Europe the reverse is altogether the case, more particularly in those countries in which the spiritual sway of the head of the Church has not been interrupted by any adventitious changes, proceeding from political revolutions, or other powerful causes. The crucifix, the spear, the cock, the nails, and the sponge, are erected at cross-roads,—chapels dedicated to Mary are seen near many a spring, or at the summit of some weary mountain; while the usual symbols of redemption are found scattered along the highways, marking the site of some death by accident, or the scene of a murder.

In no part of the other hemisphere are these evidences of faith and zeal more common than in the Catholic cantons of Switzerland. Hermitages are still frequent among the rugged rocks of that region, and it is usual to see near these secluded abodes a sort of minor chapel, that is termed, in ordinary language, a "station." These stations are so many tabernacles raised by the way-side, each containing a representation of one of the twelve sufferings of Christ. They are met equally on the side of Vesuvius, overlooking the glorious sea and land of that unequalled country; among the naked wastes of the Apennines; or buried in gorgeous groves; as accident may have determined their location. In some of the valleys of Switzerland, these little tabernacles dot the mountain-side for miles, indicating by zig-zag lines and white walls the path that leads from the village beneath to some shrine that is perhaps perched on the pinnacle of a naked rock, or which stands on a spur of the nearest range.

The shrine of Einsiedeln possessed the usual number of these tabernacles, stretching along the path that communicated with the lake of Zurich. They were designated in the customary manner; each alluding to some one of those great personal afflictions that preceded the crucifixion, and each having sentences of holy writ, to incite the pious to devotion. Here the pilgrims ordinarily commenced the worship peculiar to the place, and it was here that the Prior now awaited his companions.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Was Godde to serche our hertes and reines,
The best were synners grete;
Christ's vycarr only knowes no synne,
Ynne alle thys mortall state."—CHATTERTON.

WHEN all were arrived, the pilgrims divided themselves along the path, some kneeling before one tabernacle, and some at another. Ulrike and Lottchen, followed by the pallid Meta, prayed long at each in succession. The other females imitated their example, though evidently with less zeal and earnestness. The Knight of Rhodes and Monsieur Latouche limited their observances to a few genuflexions, and much rapid crossing of themselves with the fingers, appearing to think their general professions of faith possessed a virtue that superseded the necessity of any extraordinary demonstrations of piety. Heinrich and the smith were more particular in showing respect for the prescribed forms; the latter, who was secretly paid by his townsmen for what he did, feeling himself bound in honor to give them the worth of their money, and the Burgomaster, in addition to his looking for great temporal advantages from the whole affair, being much influenced by paternal regard for Duerckheim. As for Ilse, none was more exact than she; and, we may add, none more ostentatious.

"Hast bethought thee, Dietrich, to say an

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extra word in behalf of the general interests?" demanded Heinrich, while he patiently awaited the removal of the other, from before the last tabernacle, in order to assume the post himself.

"Nay, worshipful Burgomaster——"

"Brother Pilgrim, good smith!"

"Nay, worshipful brother and good Pilgrim, there was no question of this duty in the understanding."

"Himmel! Art such a hound, Dietrich, as to need a bribe to pray in thine own interest? Do that thou hast promised, for the penance, and in the interest of the monks, and then bethink thee, like an honest artisan, of the town of which thou art a citizen. I never rise from my knees without counting a few beads on the score of Duerckheim, and others for favor on the family of Frey."

"I cry you mercy, honorable Heinrich and excellent brother Pilgrim; the wish is reasonable, and it shall be performed."

The smith then counted off his rosary, making place for the Burgomaster as soon as he could conveniently get through with the duty. In the meantime, Arnolph had prayed devoutly, and with sincere mental abasement, before each station.

The pilgrims then arranged themselves in two lines, a form of approaching the convent of Einsiedeln that is still observed by thousands annually; the men placing themselves on the right of the path in single file, and the females on its left, in a similar order. Arnolph walked ahead, and the whole proceeded. Then began the repetition of the short prayers aloud.

Whoever has wandered much through this remarkable and wild country, must have frequently met with parties of pilgrims, marching in the manner described, and uttering their aspirations in the pure air, as they ascend to, or descend from, the altar of "our Lady of the Snow," on the Righi, or wend their way among rocky and giddy paths, seeking or returning from some other shrine. We know of no display of human worship that is more touching or impressive than this. The temple is the most magnificent on earth, the air is as limpid as mountain torrents and a high region can bestow, while sound is conveyed to the ear in its clearest and most distinct tones, aided perhaps by the echoes of dells that are nearly unfathomable, or of impending masses that appear to prop the skies. Long before the party is seen, the ear announces its approach by the music of the prayers; for music it is in such a place, the notes alternating regularly between the deep bass of the male and the silvery softness of the female voice.

Such was now the effect produced by the advance of our party from the Palatinate. Father Arnolph gave the lead, and the powerful lungs of Heinrich and the smith, though much restrained, uttered the words in tones impressively deep and audible. The response of the women was tremulous, soft, and soothing. In this manner did they proceed for a mile, when they entered the street of the hamlet.

An express had announced to the community of Einsiedeln the approach of the German penitents. By a singular perversion of the humble doctrines of the founder of the religion, far more importance was attached to the expiations and offerings of princes, and of nobles of high degree, than to those which proceeded from sources that were believed to be meaner. All the dwellers of the hamlet, therefore, and most of the others that frequented the shrine, were abroad to witness this unexpected procession. The name of Emich was whispered from ear to ear, and many curious eyes sought the form of the powerful baron, under the guise common to the whole party. By general consent, after much speculation, the popular opinion settled on the person of the smith, as on the illustrious penitent; a distinction which Dietrich owed to the strength of his lungs, to some advantage in stature, and particularly to the zeal which, as a hireling, he thought it just to throw into his air and manner.

Among the other traditions that serve to give a popular celebrity to the shrine of our Lady of the Hermits, is one which affirms that, on an occasion it is unnecessary to relate, the Son of God, in the form of man, visited this favored shrine. He is said to have assuaged his thirst at the fountain which flows, with Swiss purity and profusion, before the door of the building; and as the clear element has been made to run through different metal tubes, it is a custom of the

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pilgrims, as they arrive, to drink a hasty swallow at each, in order to obtain the virtue of a touch so revered. There was also a plate of silver, that had marks which were said to have been left by the fingers of Jesus, and to these it was the practice to apply the hand. The former usage is still universal; though modern cupidity has robbed the temple of the latter evidence of the reputed visit, in consequence of the value of the metal which bore its memorial.

Arnolph halted at the fountain, and, slowly making its circuit, drank at each spout. He was followed by all of his companions. But he passed the silver plate, and entered the building, praying aloud until his foot was on the threshold. Without stopping, he advanced and knelt on the cold stones before the shrine, fastening his eye the while on the carved image of Mary. The others imitated his movements, and, in a few minutes, all were kneeling before the far-famed chapel of the Divine Consecration.

The ancient church of Einsiedeln (for the building has since been replaced by another still larger and more magnificent) had been raised around the spot where the cell of Saint Meinard originally stood. The chapel reputed to have been consecrated by angels, was in this revered cell, and the whole stood in the centre of the more modern edifice. It was small, in comparison with the pile which held it, but of sufficient size to admit of an officiating priest, and to contain many rich offerings of the pious. The whole was encased in marble, blackened by time and the exhalations of lamps; while the front, and part of the sides, permitted a view of the interior, through openings that were protected by gratings curiously and elaborately wrought.

In the farther and dark extremity of this sacred chapel, were the images of the Mother and Child. Their dresses, as is usual at all much-worshipped shrines, were loaded with precious stones and plates of gold. The face of each had a dark and bronzed color, resembling the complexion of the far east, but which probably is a usage connected with the association of an origin and destiny that are superhuman. The whole was illuminated by strong lights, in lamps of silver gilt, and the effect, to a mind indisposed to doubt, was impressive, and of a singularly mysterious influence. Such was the shrine of our Lady of the Hermits at the time of our tale, and such it continues to be to this day, with some immaterial additions and changes, that are more the results of time than of opinion.

We have visited this resort of Catholic devotion in that elevated region of hill and frost; have strolled, near the close of day, among its numerous and decorated chapels; have seen the bare-kneed peasant of the Black Forest, the swarthy Hungarian, the glittering-eyed Piedmontese, and the fair-haired German, the Tyrolese, and the Swiss, arrive, in groups, wearied and foot-sore; have watched them drinking with holy satisfaction at the several spouts, and, having followed them to the front of the altar, have wondered at the statue-like immovability with which they have remained kneeling, without changing their gaze from that of the unearthly-looking image that seemed to engross their souls. Curiosity led us to the spot alone, and at no moment of a pilgrimage in foreign lands, that has now extended to years, do we remember to have felt so completely severed from all to which we were most accustomed, as at that hour. The groups arrived in scores, and, without pausing to exchange a greeting, without thought of lodging or rest, each hurried to the shrine, where he seemed embodied with the stone of the pavement, as, with riveted eye and abased mien, he murmured the first prayers of expiation before the image of Mary.—But to return to the narrative.

For the first hour after the arrival of the expected pilgrims of Duerckheim, not a sign of recognition, or of grace, was manifested in the convent. The officials came and went, as if none but of common character made their expiations; and the fixed eye and swarthy face of the image seemed to return each steady gaze, with supernatural tranquillity. At length Arnolph arose, and, as if his movements were watched, a bell rang in a distant aisle. A lateral door, which communicated with the conventual buildings, opened, and the whole brotherhood issued through it into the body of the church. Arnolph immediately kneeled again, and, by a sign, commanded his companions to maintain their places. Though grievously wearied

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with their positions, the men complied, but neither of the females had yet stirred.

The Benedictines of Einsiedeln entered the church in the order that has been already described in the processions of Limburg. The junior monks came first, and the dignitaries last. In that age, their Abbot was commonly of a noble and ancient, and sometimes of a princely house; for, in maintaining its influence, the Church has rarely been known to overlook the agency of those opinions and prejudices that vulgarly exist among men. In every case, however, the prelate who presided over this favored community possessed, in virtue of his office, the latter temporal distinction; being created a mitred Abbot and a prince of the Empire, on the day of his consecration.

During the slow advance of the long line of monks, that now drew near the shrine, there was a chant in the loft, and the deep organ accompanied the words, in a low key. Even Albrecht and the Abbé were much impressed, while Emich fairly trembled, like one that had unwittingly committed himself into the hands of his enemies.

The head of the train swept round the little chapel, and passed with measured steps before the pilgrims. The Prior and the females only prayed the more devoutly, but neither the Count nor the Burgomaster could prevent their truant eyes from watching the movement. Dietrich, little schooled in his duties, fairly arose, and stood repeating reverences to the whole fraternity, as it passed. When the close drew near, Emich endeavored to catch a glance of the Abbot's eyes, hoping to exchange one of those secret signs of courtesy, with which the initiated, in every class of life, know how to express their sympathies. To his confusion, and slightly to his uneasiness, he saw the well-known countenance of Bonifacius, at the side of the dignitary who presided over the brotherhood of Einsiedeln. The glances of these ancient and seemingly irreconcilable rivals were such as might have been anticipated. That of Bonifacius was replete with religious pride, and a resentment that was at least momentarily gratified; though it still retained glimmerings of conscious defeat; while that of Emich was fierce, mortified, and alarmed, all in a moment.

But the train swept on, and it was not long ere the music announced the presence of the procession in the choir. Then Arnolph again arose, and, followed by all the pilgrims, he drew near to listen to the vespers. After the prayers, the usual hymn was sung.

"Himmel! Master brother Pilgrim," whispered the smith to the Burgomaster, "that should be a voice known to all of Duerckheim!"

"Umph!"—ejaculated Heinrich, who sought the eye of Emich. "These Benedictines sing much in the same strain, Herr Emich, whether it be in Limburg, or here in the church of our Lady of the Hermits."

"By my fathers! Master Frey, but thou sayest true! To treat thee as a confidant, I little like this intimate correspondence between the Abbots, and, least of all, to see the reverend Bonifacius enthroned here, in this distant land, much as he was wont to be in our valley. I fear me, Burgomaster, that we have entered lightly on this penance!"

"If you can say this, well-born Emich, what should be the reply of one that hath wife and child, in addition to his own person, in the risk? It would have been better to covet less of Heaven, the least portion of which must naturally be better than the best of that to which we are accustomed on earth, and to be satisfied with the advantages we have. Do you note, noble Count, the friendly manner in which Bonifacius regards us from time to time?"

"His favors do not escape me, Heinrich; —but peace! we shall learn more, after the vespers are ended."

Then came the soothing power of that remarkable voice. The singer had been presented to the convent of Einsiedeln, by Bonifacius, to whom he was now useless, as a boon that was certain to give him great personal favor: and so it had proved; for in those communities, that passed their lives in the exercise of the offices of the Church, the different shades of excellence in the execution, or the greater external riches and decorations of their several shrines, often usurped the place of a nobler strife in zeal and self-denial. The ceremony now ended, and a brother, approaching, whispered Father Arnolph. The latter proceeded to the sacristy, attended by the pilgrims, for it was forbidden, even to the trembling Meta, to seek refresh-

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ment or rest, until another important duty had been performed.

The sacristy was empty, and they awaited still in silence, while the music of the organ announced the retiring procession of the monks. After some delay, a door opened, and the Abbot of Einsiedeln, accompanied by Bonifacius, appeared. They were alone, with the exception of the treasurer of the Abbey; and as the place was closed, the interview that now took place, was no longer subject to the vulgar gaze.

"Thou art Emich, Count of Hartenburg-Leiningen," said the prelate, distinguishing the noble spite of his mean attire, by a single glance of an eye accustomed to scan its equals;—"a penitent at our shrine, for wrongs done the Church, and for dishonor to God?"

"I am Emich of Leiningen, holy Abbot!"

"Dost thou disclaim the obligation to be here?"

"And a penitent—" the words "for being here" being bitterly added, in a mental reservation.

The Abbot regarded him sternly, for he disliked the reluctance of his tongue. Taking Bonifacius apart, they consulted together for a few minutes; then returning to the group of pilgrims, he resumed—

"Thou art now in a land that listeneth to no heresies, Herr von Hartenburg; and it would be well to remember thy vow and thy object. Hast thou aught to say?"

Emich slowly undid his scrip, and sought his offerings among its scanty contents.

"This crucifix was obtained by a noble of my house, when a crusader. It is of jasper, as thou seest, reverend Abbot, and it is not otherwise wanting in valuable additions."

The Abbot bowed in the manner of one indifferent to the richness of the boon, signing to the treasurer to accept the gift. There was then a brief pause.

"This censer was the gift of a noble far less possessed than thee!" said he who kept the treasures of the Abbey, with an emphasis that could not easily be mistaken.

"Thy zeal outstrippeth the limbs of a weary man, Brother.—Here is a diamond, that hath been heirloom of my house a century. 'Twas an emperor's gift!"

"It is well bestowed on our Lady of the Hermits, though she can boast of far richer offerings from names less known than thine."

Emich now hesitated, but only for an instant, and then laid down another gift.

"This vessel is suited to thy offices," he said, "being formed for the altar's services."

"Lay the cup aside," sternly and severely interrupted Bonifacius: "it cometh of Limburg!"

Emich colored, more in anger than in shame, however, for in that age plunder was one of the speediest and most used means of acquiring wealth. He eyed the merciless Abbot, fiercely, without speaking.

"I have no more," he said; "the wars—the charges of my house—and gold given the routed brotherhood, have left me poor!"

The treasurer turned to Heinrich, with an eloquent expression of countenance.

"Thou wilt remember, Master Treasurer, that there is no longer any question of a powerful baron," said the Burgomaster, "but that the little I have to give, cometh of a poor and saddled town. First we offer our wishes and our prayers,—secondly, we present, in all humility, and with the wish they may prove acceptable, these spoons, which may be of use in some of thy many ceremonies,—thirdly, this candlestick, which though small is warranted to be of pure gold, by jewellers of Frankfort:—and lastly, this cord, with which seven of our chief men have grievously and loyally scourged themselves, in the reparation of the wrong done thy brethren."

All these offerings were graciously received, and the monk turned to the others. It is unnecessary to repeat the different donations that were made by the inferiors who came from the castle and the town. That of Gottlob was, or pretended to be, the offending horn, which had so irreverently been sounded near the altar of Limburg, and a piece of gold. The latter was the identical coin he had obtained from Bonifacius, in the interview which led to his arrest; and the other was a cracked instrument, that the roguish cow-herd had often essayed among his native hills, without the least success. In after-life, when the spirit of religious party grew bolder, he often boasted of the manner in which he had tricked the Benedictines by bestowing an instrument so useless.

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Ulrike made her offering, with sincere and meek penitence. It consisted of a garment for the image of the Virgin, which had been chiefly wrought by her own fair hands, and on which the united tributes of her townswomen had been expended, in the way of ornaments, and in stones of inferior price. The gift was graciously received; for the community had been well instructed in the different characters of the various penitents.

"Hast thou aught in honor of Maria?" demanded the treasurer of Lottchen.

The widowed and childless woman endeavored to speak, but her power failed her. She laid upon the table, however, a neatly bound and illuminated missal; a cap that seemed to have no particular value, except its tassel of gold and green, and a hunting-horn; all of which, with many others of the articles named, had made part of the load borne on the furniture of the ass.

"These are unusual gifts at our shrine!" muttered the monk.

"Reverend Benedictine," interrupted Ulrike, nearly breathless in the generous desire to avert pain from her friend, "they are extorted from her who gives, like drops of blood from the heart. This is Lottchen Hintermayer, of whom thou hast doubtless heard?"

The name of Lottchen Hintermayer had never reached the treasurer's ear; but the sweet and persuasive manner of Ulrike prevailed. The monk bowed, and he seemed satisfied. The next that advanced was Meta. The Benedictines all appeared struck by the pallid color of her cheek, and the vacant, hopeless expression of an eye that had lately been so joyous.

"The journey hath been hard upon our daughter!" said the princely Abbot, with gentleness and concern.

"She is young, reverend Father," answered Ulrike; "but God will temper the wind to the shorn lamb."

The Abbot looked surprised, for the tones of the mother met his ear with an appeal as touching as that of the worn countenance of the girl.

"Is she thy child, good pilgrim?"

"Father, she is—Heaven make me grateful for its blessed gift!"

Another gaze from the wondering priest, and he gave place to the treasurer, who advanced to receive the offering. The frame of Meta trembled violently, and she placed a hand to her bosom. Drawing forth a paper, she laid it simply before the monk, who gazed at it in wonder.

"What is this?" he asked. "It is the image of a youth, rudely sketched!"

"It meaneth, Father," half whispered Ulrike, "that the heart which loved him, now belongs to God!"

The Abbot bowed, hastily signing to the inferior to accept the offering; and he walked aside to conceal a tear that started to his eye. Meta at that moment fell upon her mother's breast, and was borne silently from the sacristy.

The men followed, and, with a single exception, the two Abbots and the treasurer were now left alone.

"Hast thou an offering, good woman?" demanded the latter of the female who remained.

"Have I an offering, Father! Dost think I would come thus far with an empty hand? I am Ilse, Frau Frey's nurse, that Duerckheim hath sent on this pilgrimage, as an offering in herself; and such it truly is for frail bones, and threescore and past. We are but poor townspeople of the Palatinate, but then we know what is available at need! There are many reasons why I should come, as thou shalt hear. Firstly, I was in Limburg church when the deed was——"

"How! did one of thy years go forth on such an expedition?"

"Ay, and on many other expeditions. Firstly, I was with the old Burgomaster, Frau Ulrike's father, when there was succor sent to Manheim; secondly, I beheld, from our hills, the onset between the Elector's men and the followers of——"

"Dost thou serve the mother of yonder weeping girl?" demanded the Abbot, cutting short the history of Ilse's campaigns.

"And the weeping girl herself, reverend, and holy, and princely Abbot, and, if thou wilt, the Burgomaster too, for, at times, in sooth, I serve the whole family."

"Canst thou repeat the history of her sorrow?"

"Naught easier, my lord and Abbot. Firstly, is she youthful, and that is an age when we grieve or are gladdened with little

reason; then she is an only child, which is apt to weaken the spirit by indulgence; next, she is fair, which often tempts the heart into various vanities, and, doubtless, into sorrow, among the others; then is she foot-sore, a bitter grief of itself; and, finally, she hath much repentance for this nefarious sin, of which we are not yet purged, and which, unless pardoned, may descend to her, among other bequests from her father."

"It is well. Deposit thy gift, and kneel that I may bless thee."

Ilse did as ordered, after which she withdrew, making many reverences in the act.

As the door closed on the crone, Bonifacius and his brother Abbot quitted the place in company, leaving the monk charged with that duty, to care for the wealth that had been so liberally added to the treasury of Einsiedeln.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"Israel, are these men
The mighty hearts you spoke of?"—Byron.

There was little resemblance in the characters of the two prelates, beyond that which was the certain consequence of their common employment. If Bonifacius was the most learned, of the strongest intellectual gifts, and, in other particulars relating to the mind, of the higher endowments, the princely Abbot of Einsiedeln had more of those gentle and winning qualities which best adorn the Christian life. Perhaps neither was profoundly and meekly pious, for this was not easy to men surrounded by so many inducements to flatter their innate weaknesses: but both habitually respected the outward observances of their Church; and both, in degrees proportioned to the boldness and sagacity of their respective intellects, yielded faith to the virtue of its offices.

On quitting the sacristy, they proceeded through the cloisters, to the abode of the chief of the community. Here, closeted together, there was a consultation concerning their further proceedings.

"Thou wert of near neighborhood," said he of our Lady of the Hermits, "to this hardy baron, Brother Bonifacius?"

"As thou mayest imagine by the late events. There lay but a few arrow's flights between his castle and our unhappy walls."

"Had ye good understanding of old, or cometh the present difficulty from long-standing grievances?"

"Thou art happy, pious Rudiger, to be locked, as you are, among your frosts and mountains, beyond the reach of noble's arm, and beyond the desires of noble's ambition. Limburg and the craving Counts have scarc known peace since our Abbey's foundation. Your unquiet baron fills some such agency, in respect to our religious communities, as that which the unquiet spirit of the Father of Sin occupies in the moral world."

"And yet, I doubt that the severest blow we are to receive will come from one of ourselves! If all that rumor and missives from the Bishops reveal, be true, this schism of Luther promises us a lasting injury!"

Bonifacius, whose mind penetrated the future much farther than most of his brethren possessed the means of doing, heard this remark gloomily; and he sat brooding over the pictures which a keen imagination presented, while his companion watched the play of his massive features with intuitive interest.

"Thou art right, princely Abbot," the former at length replied. "To us, both the future and the past are filled with lessons of deep instruction, could we but turn them to present advantage. All that we know of earth shows that each physical thing returns to its elements, when the object of its creation has been accomplished. The tree helps to pile the earth which once nourished its roots; the rock crumbles to the sand of which it was formed; and even man turns to that dust which was animated that he might live. Can we then expect that our Abbeys, or that even the Church itself, in its present temporal organization, will stand forever?"

"Thou hast done well to qualify thy words by saying temporal, good Bonifacius, for if the body decays, the soul remains; and the essence of our communion is in its spiritual character."

"Hearken, right reverend and noble Rudiger. Go ask of Luther the niceties of his creed on this point, and he will tell thee, that he is a believer in the transmigration of

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souls—that he keepeth this spiritual character, but in a new dress; and that, while he consigns the ancient body to the tomb, he only lightens the imperishable part of a burden that has grown too heavy to be borne."

"But this is rank rebellion to authority, and flat refusal of doctrine!"

"Of the former, there can be no question; and, as to our German regions, most seem prepared to incur its risks. In respect to doctrine, learned Rudiger, you now broach a thesis which resembles the bells in your convent towers—on which there may be rung endless changes, from the simple chime to a triple-bob-major."

"Nay, reverend Bonifacius, thou treatest a grave subject with irreverent levity. If we are to tolerate these innovations, there is an end of discipline; and I marvel that a dignified priest should so esteem them!"

"Thou dost me injustice, Brother; for what I urge is said in befitting seriousness. The ingenuity of man is so subtle, and his doubts, once engaged, so restless, that when the barrier of discipline is raised, I know no conclusion for which a clever head may not find a reason. Has it never struck thee, reverend Rudiger, that a great error hath been made from the commencement, in founding all our ordinances to regulate society, whether they be of religious or of mere temporal concerns?"

"Thou asketh this of one who hath been accustomed to think of his superiors with respect."

"I touch not on our superiors, nor on their personal qualities. What I would say is, that our theories are too often faulty, inasmuch as they are made to suit former practices; whereas, in a well-ordered world, methinks the theory should come first, and the usage follow as a consequence of suitable conclusions."

"This might have done for him who possessed Eden, but those who came after were compelled to receive things as they were, and to turn them to profit as they might."

"Brother and princely Abbot, thou hast grappled with the dilemma! Could we be placed in the occupancy of this goodly heritage, untrammelled by previously endeared interests, seeing the truth, naught would be easier than to make practice conform to theory; but, being that we are, priest and noble, saint and sinner, philosopher and worldling, why, look you, the theory is driven to conform to the necessities of practice; and hence doctrine, at the best, is but a convertible authority. As a Benedictine, and a lover of Rome, I would that Luther had been satisfied with mere changes in habits, for these may be accommodated to climates and prejudices; but when the flood-gates of discussion are raised, no man can say to what extent, or in what direction, the torrent will flow."

"Thou hast little faith, seemingly, in the quality of reason?"

Bonifacius regarded his companion a moment with an ill-concealed sneer.

"Surely, holy Rudiger," he gravely replied, "thou hast not so long governed thy fellows to put this question to me! Hadst thou said passion, we might right quickly come to an understanding. The corollaries of our animal nature follow reasonably enough from the proposition; but when we quit the visible landmarks of the species, to launch upon the ocean of speculation, we commit ourselves, like the mariner who trusts his magnet, to an unknown cause. He that is a-hungered will eat, and he that is pained will roar; he that hath need of gold will rob, in some shape or other; and he that loveth his ease may prefer quiet to trouble: all this may be calculated, with other inferences that follow; but if thou wilt tell me what course the lammergeyer will take when he hath soared beyond the Alps, I will tell thee the direction in which the mind of man will steer when fairly afloat on the sea of speculation and argument."

"The greater the necessity that it should be held in the wholesome limits of discipline and doctrine."

"Were doctrine like our convent walls, all would be well; but being what it is, men become what they are."

"How! Dost thou account faith for naught? I have heard there were brothers of deep piety in Limburg. Father Johan, who perished in defence of thy altars, may go near to be canonized—to say nothing of the excellent Prior, who is here among us on this pilgrimage."

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"I count faith for much, excellent Brother; and happy is he who can satisfy uneasy scruples by so pleasant an expedient. Brother Johan may be canonized, if our Father of Rome shall see fit, hereafter, and the fallen Limburg will have reason to exult in its member. Still I do not see that the unhappy Johan proveth aught against the nature of doctrine, for, had he been possessed of less pertinacity in certain of his opinions, he would have escaped the fate which befell him."

"Is martyrdom a lot to displease a Christian? Bethink thee of the Fathers, and of their ends!"

"Had Johan bethought him more of their fortunes, his own might have been different. Reverend Abbot, Johan hath long ceased to be a riddle to me;—though I deny not his utility with the peasant and the fervent. But him thou hast last mentioned"—here Bonifacius leaned a cheek on his hand, and spoke like one that was seriously perplexed—"him thou namedst last—the sincere, and wise, and simple Arnolph, have I never truly comprehended! That man appeareth equally contented in his cell or in his stall; honored equally in his office and on this weary pilgrimage; whether in prosperity or in misfortune, he is ever at peace with himself and with others. Here is truly a man that no reasoning of mine hath been able to fathom. He is not ambitious, for thrice hath he refused the mitre! He is sustained by no wild visions or deceitful fantasies, like the unhappy Johan; nor yet is he indifferent to any of the more severe practices of his profession, all of which are observed quietly, and seemingly with satisfaction. He is learned, without the desire of discussion; meek, amid a firmness that would despise the stake; and forgiving to a degree that might lead us to call him easy, but for a consistency that never seemeth to yield to any influence of season, events, or hopes. Truly, this is a man that baffleth all my knowledge!"

Bonifacius, in despite of his acquirements, his masculine intellect, and his acquaintance with men, did not perceive how much he admitted against himself, by expressing his own inability to fathom the motives of the Prior. Nor did the enigma appear to be perfectly intelligible to his companion, who listened curiously to the other's description of their brother, much as we hearken to a history of inexplicable or supernatural incidents.

"I have heard much of Arnolph," observed the latter, "though never matter so strange as this;—and yet most seem to love him!"

"Therein is his power!—though often most opposed to me, I cannot say that I myself am indifferent to the man.—By our patron saint! I sometimes fain believe I love him! He was among the last to desert our altars, when pressed by this rapacious noble, and his credulous and silly burghers; and yet was he foremost to forgive the injury when committed. But for him, and his high influence with the Bishops, there might have been blows for blows spite of this schism that hath turned so many in Germany from our support."

"And since thou speakest of the schism, in what manner dost thou account for an innovation so hardy in a region that is usually esteemed reasonable? There must have been relaxation of authority, for there is no expedient so certain to prevent heresies, or errors of doctrine, as a Church well established, and which is maintained by fitting authority."

Bonifacius smiled, for even in that early age, his penetrating mind saw the fallacy to which the other was a dupe.

"This is well when there is right; but when there is error, Brother, your established authority does not uphold it. The provisions that are made in thy comfortable abode to keep the cold air out, may be the means of keeping foul air within."

"In this manner of reasoning, truth can have no existence!—Thou dreadest doctrine, and thou wilt naught of discipline!"

"Nay, holy Rudiger, in the latter thou greatly misconceivest me. Of discipline I would have all that is possible; I merely deny that it is any pledge of truth. We are apt to say that a well-ordained and established Church is the buttress of truth, when experience plainly showeth that this discipline doeth more harm to truth than it can ever serve it, and that simply because there can be but one truth, while there are many modes of discipline; many establishments therefore uphold many errors, or truth hath no identity with itself."

"Thou surprisest me!—Whatever may

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come of this heresy, as yet I know of but one assault on our supremacy; and that cometh of error, as we come of right."

"This is well for Christendom, but what sayeth it for your Moslem—your fire-worshipper—your Hindoo—your Pagan, and all the rest; any one of whom is just as ready to keep out error by discipline, as we of Rome? Until now, certainly among Christians this evil hath not often happened, though even we are not without our differences; but looking to this advance of the printing art, and of the variety of opinions that are its fruits, I foresee that we are to have many opposing expedients, all of which will be equally well pondered and concocted to keep in truth, and to exclude error. This pretension of high authority, and of close exactions to maintain purity of doctrine, and what we deem truth, is well, as the jurists say, *quoad hoc;* but touching the general question, I do not see its virtue. Now that men enlist with passion in these spiritual discussions, we may look to see various modifications of the Church, all of which will be more or less buttressed by human expedients, as so many preservatives of truth; but when the time shall come that countries and communities are divided among themselves on these subtleties, look you, excellent Rudiger, we may expect to shut in as much error by our laws and establishments, as we shall shut out. I fear heaven is a goal that must be reached by a general mediation, leaving each to give faith to the minor points of doctrine, according to his habits and abilities."

"This savors more of the houseless Abbot than of him who lately had an obedient and flourishing brotherhood!" Rudiger somewhat piquantly rejoined.

Bonifacius was unmoved by the evident allusion, regarding his companion coolly, and like a man who too well knew his own superiority easily to take offence. His reply, however, would probably have been a retort, notwithstanding this seeming moderation, had not a door opened, and Arnolph quietly entered the room.

The reception of the Prior, by his two mitred brethren, proved the deep respect which had so universally been won by his self-denying qualities. In the great struggle of the conflicting egotism which composes, in a great degree, the principle of most of the actions of this uneasy world, no one is so likely to command universal esteem, as he who appears willing to bear the burden of life, with as little as possible of its visible benefits, by withdrawing himself from the arena of its contentions. In the great mass, an occasional retreat from the struggle, on the part of those who have few means of success, creates but little feeling of any sort, perhaps; but when he that hath undeniable pretensions exhibits this forbearance, he may be certain of obtaining full credit for all that he possesses, and more, even to the admission of qualifications that would be vehemently denied had he taken a different attitude in respect to his rivals. Such was, in some measure, the position of Father Arnolph; and Bonifacius himself never struggled to resist his natural impulses towards the pious monk, having a secret persuasion that none of his virtues, however publicly proclaimed, were likely to militate against his own interests.

"Thou art much wearied, holy Prior," said the Abbot of Einsiedeln, offering a seat to his visitor, with assiduous and flattering attention.

"I count it not, princely Rudiger; having lightened the way with much good discourse, and many prayers; my pilgrims are faint, but, happily arrived, they are now fairly committed to the convent's hospitality."

"Thou hast with thee, reverend Arnolph, a noble of high esteem in thy German country?"

"Of ancient blood, and of great worldly credit," returned the Prior, with reserve.

"What thinkest thou, Brother Bonifacius?—It may not be prudent to make any very public manifestations of a difference of treatment, between those who seek our shrine; but do not hospitality and such courtesy as marketh our own breeding, demand some private greetings. Is my opinion suitable, worthy Arnolph?"

"God is no respecter of persons, Abbot of Einsiedeln."

"Can any know this better than ourselves? But we pretend not to perfection, nor can our judgments be set up as decisive of men's merits, farther than belongs to our office. Ours is an hospitable order, and we

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are priveleged to earn esteem, and therefore doth it appear to me not only becoming but politic to show a noble of this repute, and at a moment when heresy runs mad, that we do not overlook the nature of his sacrifices. Thou art silent, Brother Abbot!"

The Abbot of Limburg listened with secret satisfaction, for he had views of his own that the proposal favored. He was therefore about to give a ready assent, when Arnolph interrupted him.

"I have nobles among my followers, right reverend Abbot," said the latter, earnestly; "and I have those that deserve to be more than noble, if deep Christian humility can claim to be so esteemed. I did not come to speak of Emich of Hartenburg, but of spirits sorely bruised, and to beg of thee, in their behalf, a boon of churchly offices."

"Name it, Father, and make certain of its fair reception. But it is now late, and no rites of the morrow need defeat our intentions of honest hospitality."

"They in whose behalf I would speak," said Arnolph, with apparent mortification, "are already without; if admitted, they may best explain their own desires."

The Abbot signified a ready assent to receive these visitors, and the Prior hastened to admit them, anticipating a wholesome effect on the minds of his superiors from the interview. When he reappeared, he was followed by Ulrike, Lottchen, and Meta, who came after him in the order named. Both the Abbots seemed surprised, for it exceeded their confidence in themselves to admit visitors of that sex, at an hour so equivocal, in the more retired parts of the buildings, and they counted little on the boldness of innocence.

"This exceedeth usage!" exclaimed the superior of Einsiedeln. "It is true, we have our privileges, pious Arnolph, but they are resorted to with great discretion."

"Fear not, holy Abbot," Arnolph calmly answered, "this visit may at least claim to be as harmless as that of those thou hast just named. Speak, virtuous Ulrike, that thy wishes may be known."

Ulrike crossed herself, first casting a tearful eye on the pallid and depressed countenances of her daughter and of her friend.

"We are come to your favored shrine, princely and pious Abbot," she slowly commenced, like one who feared the effects of her own words, "penitents, pilgrims, and acknowledging our sins, in order to expiate a great wrong, and to implore Heaven's pardon. The accomplishment of our wishes hath been promised by the Church, and by one greater than the Church, should we bring with us contrite hearts. In this behalf, then, we have now little to offer, since our pious guide, the beloved and instructed Arnolph, hath taught us to omit no observance, nor hath he, in any particular, left us ignorant of the state of mind that best befitteth our present undertaking. But, right reverend Abbot——"

"Proceed, daughter; thou wilt find all here ready to listen," said Rudiger, kindly, observing that her words became choked, and that she continued to cast uneasy looks at Lottchen and Meta. The voice of the speaker sank, but her tones were still more earnest, as she continued.

"Holy Benedictine, aided by Heaven's kindness, I will. In all that toucheth our pilgrimage and its duties, we confide entirely to the pious counsel of the learned and godly Arnolph, and he will tell you that naught material hath by us been neglected. We have prayed, and confessed, and fasted, and done the needed expiations, in a meek mood, and with contrite hearts. We come then to ask a service of this favored community, which, we trust, may not be refused to the Christian."

The Abbot looked surprised, but he awaited her own time to continue.

"It hath pleased Heaven to call away one dear to us, at a short summons," proceeded Ulrike, not without casting another fearful glance at her companions; "and we would ask the powerful prayers of the community of Our Lady of the Hermits, in behalf of his soul."

"Of what age was the deceased?"

"God summoned him, reverend Abbot, in early youth."

"By what means did he come to his end?"

"By a sudden display of Heaven's power."

"Died he at peace with God and the Church?"

"Father, his end was sudden and calami-

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tous. None can know the temper of the mind at that awful moment."

"But did he live in the practices of our faith? Thou comest of a region in which there is much heresy, and this is an hour in which the shepherd cannot desert the fold."

Ulrike paused, for the breathing of her friend was thick and audible.

"Princely Abbot, he was a Christian. I held him myself at the font. This humble penitent and pilgrim gave him birth, and to this holy Prior hath he often confessed."

The Abbot greatly disliked the manner of the answers. His brow drew over the eyes, and he turned jealous glances from Arnolph to the females.

"Canst thou vouch for thy penitent?" he demanded abruptly of the Prior.

"His soul hath need of masses."

"Was he tainted with the heresy of the times?"

Arnolph paused. His mind underwent a severe struggle, for, while he distrusted the opinions of Berchthold, he knew nothing that a scrupulous and conscientious judge could fairly construe into unequivocal evidence of his dereliction from the Church.

"Thou dost not answer, Prior!"

"God hath not gifted me with knowledge to judge the secret heart."

"Ha! this grows plainer. Reverend Bonifacius, canst thou say aught of this?"

The dethroned Abbot of Limburg had, at first, listened to the dialogue with indifference. There had even been an ironical smile on his lips while Ulrike was speaking, but when Arnolph was questioned, it disappeared in an active and a curious desire to know in what manner a man so conscientious would extricate himself from the dilemma. Thus directly questioned, however, he found himself obliged to become a party in the discourse.

"I well know, princely and pious Rudiger, that heresy is rife in our misguided Palatinate," he answered; "else would not the Abbot of Limburg be a houseless guest in Einsiedeln."

"Thou hearest, daughter! The youth is suspected of having died an enemy of the Church."

"The greater the errors, if this be true, the greater the need that prayers be offered for his soul."

"This would be truly aiding Lucifer in his designs to overturn our tabernacles, and a weakness not to be indulged. I am grieved to be compelled to show this discipline to one of thy seeming zeal, but our altars cannot be defiled by sacrifices in behalf of those who despise them. Was the youth connected with the fall of Limburg?"

"Father, he died in the crush of its roofs," said Ulrike, in nearly inaudible syllables; "and we deem the manner of his end another reason why extraordinary masses should be said in his behalf."

"Thou askest an impossibility. Were we to yield to our pity, in these cases of desperate heresies, it would discourage the faithful, and embolden those who are already too independent."

"Father!" said a tremulous and low, but eager voice.

"What wouldst thou, daughter?" asked the Abbot, turning to Lottchen.

"Listen to a mother's prayer. The boy was born and educated in the bosom of the Church. For reasons at which I do not repine, Heaven early showed its displeasure on his father and on me. We were rich and we became poor; we were esteemed of men, and we learned how much better is the support of God. We submitted; and when we saw those who had once looked up to us in respect, looking down upon us in scorn, we kissed the child, were grateful, and did not repine. Even this trial was not sufficient—the father was taken from his pains and mortifications, and my son put on the livery of a baron. I will not say—I cannot say—my strength would have been equal to all this of itself. An angel, in the form of this constant and excellent woman, was sent to sustain me. Until the late wrong to Limburg, we had our hopes and our hours of happiness—but that crime defeated all. My boy hath perished by a just anger, and I remain to implore Heaven in his behalf. Wilt thou refuse the Church's succor to a childless mother, who, this favor obtained, will be ready to bless God and die?"

"Thou troublest me, daughter; but I beg thee to remember I am but the guardian of a high and sacred trust."

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"Father!" said a second and still more thrilling appeal.

"Thou too, child! What wouldst thou of one but too ready to yield, were it not for duty?"

Meta had kneeled, and throwing back the hood of her pilgrim's mantle, the change left her bloodless face exposed to the Abbot's view. The girl seemed severely struggling with herself; then, finding encouragement in her mother's eye, she was able to continue.

"I know, most holy and very reverend Abbot," she commenced, with an evidently regulated phraseology, like one who had been instructed how to make the appeal, "that the Church hath need of much discipline; without which there would be neither duration nor order in its existence. This hath my mother taught me; and we both admit it, and prize the truth. For this reason have we submitted ourselves to all its ordinances, never failing to confess and worship, or to observe fasts and saints' days. Even the mitred Bonifacius, there, will not deny this, as respects either of us——"

Meta delayed, as if inviting the Abbot to gainsay her words if he could; but Bonifacius was silent.

"As for him that hath died," resumed Meta, whose voice sounded like plaintive music, "this is the truth. He was born a Christian, and he never said aught in my presence against the Church. Thou canst not think, father, that he who sought my esteem, would strive to gain it by means that no Christian girl could respect? That he was often at the Abbey confessionals I know; and that he was in favor with this holy Prior, thou hast but to ask, to learn. In going against Limburg, he did but obey his lord, as others have often done before; and surely all that fall in battle are not to be hopelessly condemned. If there is heresy in Germany, is it not enough of itself to endure so great a danger in life, that the dead must be abandoned to their past acts, without succor from the Church, or thought from their friends? Oh! thou wilt think better, holy but cruel Rudiger, of thy hasty decision. Give us then masses for poor Berchthold! I know not what Bonifacius may have said to thee in secret, concerning the youth, but this much would I say in his favor, in presence of the assembled earth — more pious son, more faithful follower, a braver at need, a more gentle in intercourse, a truer or kinder heart than his, does not now beat in the Palatinate! I know not but I exceed the limits of a maiden's speech, in what I say," continued the girl ardently, a bright spot shining on each cheek amid her tears, "but the dead are mute, and if those they loved are cold to their wants, in what manner is Heaven to know their cruel need?"

"Good daughter," interrupted the Abbot, who began to feel distressed, "we will think of this. Go thou to thy rest,—and may God bless thee!"

"Nay, I cannot sleep while the soul of Berchthold endures this jeopardy! Perhaps the Church will demand penance in his behalf. My mother Lottchen is no longer young and strong, as formerly; but thou seest, Father, what I am! Name what thou wilt—pilgrimages, fasts, stripes, prayers, or vigils, are alike to me. Nay, think not that I regard them! Thou canst not bestow more happiness than to give this task for poor Berchthold's sake. Oh! hadst thou known him, holy monk, so kind with the weak, so gentle with us maidens, and so true, thou wouldst not, nay, thou couldst not heed another prayer to grant the masses!"

"Bonifacius, is there no means of justifying the concession?"

"I would speak to thee, Brother," answered he of Limburg, who, with a thoughtful countenance, awaited his companion a little apart from the others.

The conference of the two prelates was short, but it was decisive.

"Take away the child," said the Abbot Rudiger, to Ulrike; "the weight of Heaven's displeasure must be borne."

The Prior sighed heavily; but he signed for the females to obey, like one who saw the uselessness of further entreaties. Leading the way, he left the Abbot's abode, his companions following; nor did a murmur escape either while giving this proof of patient submission. It was only when Ulrike and Lottchen had reached the open air that they found the helpless girl they supported was without sensibility. As fits of fainting had been common of late, her mother felt no great alarm, nor was it long before all the

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female pilgrims sought the pillows they so much needed.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Fy, uncle Beaufort! I have heard you preach,
That malice was a great and grievous sin."
—*King Henry VI.*

THE social character of a Benedictine community has been mentioned in one of the earlier chapters. That of Einsiedeln, though charged with the worship of altars especially favored, formed no exception to the general rule. If anything, the number of distinguished pilgrims that frequented its shrine, rendered it liable to more than usual demands on its hospitality; demands that were met by a suitable attention to the rules of the brotherhood. Even Loretto has its palace for the entertainment of such princes as can descend from their thrones to kneel in the "santa casa;" for policy, not to speak of a more generous motive, requires that the path should be smoothed to those devotees who are unaccustomed to encounter difficulties. In conformity with a rule of their order, then, though dwelling in the secluded and wild region already described, the fraternity of our Lady of the Hermits, had their Abbot's abode, their lodgings for the stranger, and their stores of cheer, as well as their cells and their religious rites.

It was about three hours after the interview related in the last chapter—a time that brings us near the turn of the night—that we shall return to the narrative. The scene is a banqueting-hall, or, to speak in more measured phrase, a private refectory, in which the princely Abbot was wont to entertain those in whose behalf he saw sufficient reasons to exercise more than ordinary attention and favor. There was no great show of luxury in the ordinary decorations of the place, for a useless display of its means formed no part of the system of a community that chiefly existed by the liberality of the pious. Still the hall was as well arranged as comported with the rude habits of the age, in that secluded region—habits that consulted the substantial portion of human enjoyments far more than those elaborate and effeminate inventions, which use has since rendered nearly indispensable to later generations. The floor was of tile, not very nicely polished; the walls were wainscoted in dark oak; and the ceiling had a rude attempt to represent the supper given at the marriage of Cana, and the miracle of the wine. Notwithstanding it was midsummer, a cheerful fire blazed in a chimney of huge dimensions; the size of the apartment and the keen air of the mountains rendering such an auxiliary not only agreeable, but necessary. The board was spacious and well covered, offering a generous display of those healthful and warm liquors, which have so long given the Rhine additional estimation with every traveller of taste.

Around the table were placed the Abbot, and his unhoused peer, Bonifacius; a favorite or two of the community of Einsiedeln; with Emich, the Knight of Rhodes, the Abbé, Heinrich Frey, and the smith. The former were in their usual conventual robes; while the latter were confounded, so far as externals were concerned, in their dresses of pilgrims. Deitrich owed his present advantage altogether to the fortuitous circumstance of being found in so good company, divested of the usual distinguishing marks of his rank. If Bonifacius was at all aware of his character, indifference or policy prevented its exposure.

Had one been suddenly introduced to this midnight scene, he would scarce have recognized the weary penitent and the reproving churchman, in the jovial cheer and boon companionship of the hour. The appetite was already more than satisfied, and many a glass had been quaffed in honor of both hosts and and guests, ere the precise moment to which we transfer the action of the tale.

The princely prelate occupied the seat of honor, as became his high rank, while Bonifacius was seated at one elbow, and the Count of Hartenburg at the other. The great consideration due to the first, as well as to his personal character and mild manners, had served to preserve all outward appearances of amity and courteous intercourse between his neighbors, neither of whom had as yet suffered the slightest intimation of their former knowledge of each other to escape him. This polite duplicity, which we have reason to think is of very ancient origin, and in which

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Albrecht of Viederbach and Monsieur Latouche assisted with rare felicity, aided in curbing the feelings of their inferiors, who being less trained in the seemliness of deception, might otherwise have given vent to some of their bodily pains by allusions of an irritating and questionable nature.

"Thou findest our liquors palatable?" courteously observed the Abbot, as we shall, *par excellence*, now distinguish him of Einsiedeln. "This of the silver cup, cometh from the liberality of thy late Elector, who had occasion to send votive offerings, in behalf of the illness of one of his family, to our Lady of the Hermits, and who had the grace to accompany the memorial to the convent treasury by this sign of private regard; and that thou seemest most to relish, is a neighborly boon from our Brother of Saint Gall, than whom more generous churchman does not wear a cowl. Thou knowest, son, that the matter of good wine hath long been the subject of especial care with that thriving brotherhood."

"Thou overratest my knowledge of history, princely Abbot," returned Emich, setting down the glass, however, in a manner to show that his familiarity with good liquors might safely be assumed. "We of the lower countries waste but little time on these studies, trusting chiefly to those who dwell at the universities for the truth of what we hear. If he of Saint Gall dispenseth much of this goodly liquor, certes it were well that our spiritual guardians sent us, on occasions, to make our pilgrimages in that region, which cannot be far from this, unless my geography is greatly in fault."

"Thou couldest not have better divined, hadst thou been a doctor of Wittenberg, or of Rome itself! Considering our mountain paths, and the insufficiency of the bridges and other conveniences, it may require two suns to urge a beast from our convent gate to that of our brother of Saint Gall, though, on emergencies, we have succeeded, by means of faithful footmen, in getting tidings to their ears within the day and night. Saint Gall is a wealthy and well-bestowed Abbey, of very ancient existence, and of much repute as the haven of letters, during the darkest period, learned Bonifacius, of our more modern times; though the late increase of its town, and the growing turbulence of the times, have not permitted it to escape, with impunity, from the dangers that now beset all of Rome."

This was the first allusion which had been made to the events that had so singularly brought the present company together; and, but for the address and self-command of Bonifacius, it might have brought on a discussion that would not have proved agreeable.

"Saint Gall and its merits are unknown to none who wear the frock of Saint Benedict," he said, with admirable composure. "Thou hast well said that its walls were, for many ages, the sole protectors of learning in our Europe; for without the diligence and fidelity of its Abbots and brotherhood, much that is now preserved and prized would have been irretrievably lost to posterity and to ourselves."

"I doubt not, reverend Benedictine," observed Emich, speaking courteously across the Abbot to Bonifacius, much as a well-bred guest at board addresses a convive to whom he is otherwise a stranger, "that this rare taste in liquors, of which there has just been question, is the fruit of the excellent knowledge which you extol?"

"That is a point I shall not hastily decide," returned Bonifacius, smiling. "It may be so, for we have accounts of sore discord between Saint Gall and others even of the Church, touching the uses and qualities of their wines."

"That have we, and right faithfully recorded!" rejoined the Abbot. "There was the war between the Prince Bishop of Basle and our brethren of Saint Gall, that led to sore contentions and heavy losses."

"How! did the desire to partake urge our Rhenish prelate to push adventure so far as to come this distance in quest of liquor?"

"Thou art in error, son pilgrim, concerning the nature of Saint Gall's stores. We have vineyards, it is true, among these mountains, as witness those on the shores of the neighboring lake of Zurich, as well as others that might be named; but our country wines will warm the blood of peasant only. He that hath tasted better, seldom fills his cup with liquor that comes from any region this side the farther border of Swabia

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—your vines of the Rheingau in specialty; whereas the territories of Saint Gall lie still farther from those favored countries than we ourselves."

"You have need to explain, princely Abbot; for that the Baslois should come in our direction, in quest of good liquor, is clear enough, whereas the war you have named would have sent him farther from his object."

"Thou hast not come hither, son, without marking the course of the Rhine, on whose banks thou hast so long journeyed. This great stream, though so turbulent and dangerous among the mountains, is of much use in procuring our supplies. By means of the lake of Constance, and the lower river, heavy burthens arrive at the very territory of our sister Abbey; and the dispute to which there has been allusion, came of the fact that the right reverend prelate of Basle would fain have demanded toll on the purchases of the Abbey. Thou mayest remember, brother," looking toward Bonifacius, "that when both were tired of blows, the good Bishop sent to demand 'What the Virgin had done, that the churchmen above should slay her people?' and that he received for a merry answer the question of, 'What has Saint Gall done, that thou shouldest stop his wines?'"

The listeners laughed, in low simpers, like men amused with this characteristic narative; for such incidents were yet too recent to excite much other reflection, even among churchmen, than what was connected with the vulgar temporal interests of the incident.

"By the Magi! holy and princely Abbot, thy tale giveth additional flavor!" said Emich, who greatly enjoyed the quarrel; "it moreover serveth to shut out thoughts that come from aching bones and weary feet."

"Thy pilgrimage, son, will bring its rewards as well as its pains. Should it be a means of removing thee, for a time, from the heresies of Germany, and of placing thee and thine in more friendly communion with the Church, the toil will not be lost."

"As such do I esteem the duty," returned Emich, tossing off his glass, after steadily regarding the liquor a moment by the firelight. "Saint Gall had the right of the matter; and he who would not take up arms for this, did not deserve to wear them. How, now, Herr Frey! Thou art silent?"

"Not more so, I trust, nobly-born Emich, than becometh one on a pilgrimage; and one who hath need to bethink him of his duties, lest his town should have cause to reproach him with negligence."

"God's truth, Master Burgomaster! If any here have reason to bethink them of Duerckheim, it is the city's sovereign and lord. So cheer up, and let us lighten the load we carry, always under the favor and good graces of this hospitable and well-endowed brotherhood."

"Thou art a servitor of the Cross?" demanded the Abbot of Albrecht of Viederbach, beckoning the Knight to come nearer.

"An indifferent one, princely and pious Rudiger, and, I might say, one that hath yielded to the seductions of company and good fellowship, not to speak of the force of blood; else would he have been spared this expiation."

"Nay, I name not thy pursuit with the intent to reproach," interrupted the courteous prelate. "Such liberty does not become hospitality. We make a difference within these walls between the confessional and the board."

"The distinction is just, and promises perpetuity and lasting respect to our faith, spite of all heresies. The rock on which this Brother Luther and his followers will split, holy Abbot—at least, it so seemeth to an uninstructed capacity—is the desire to refine beyond men's means of endurance. Religion, like chivalry, is good in its way; but neither the priest nor the knight can bear his armor at all times and seasons. Your schismatic hath the desire to convert the layman into a monk, whereas the beauty of creation is its order; and he that is charged with the cure of souls, is sufficient for his object, without laying this constant burthen on the shoulders of him that hath already more of temporal cares than he can bear."

"Were others more of thy mind, son, we should have less trouble, and better discipline. Our altars are not useless, and if they who frequent them, could be content to think that we are sufficient for their safety, the world would be saved much disputation and haply some shedding of blood. But with

these safe and creditable opinions, Sir Knight and Pilgrim," continued the Abbot, dropping his voice to a more confidential key, "it may be permitted me to express surprise, that I see thee one of a penitence commanded for violence done a convent!"

Albrecht of Viederbach shrugged his shoulders, and glanced meaningly toward his cousin.

"What will you, right noble and reverend Prelate!—We are but the creatures of accident. There is respect due to fellowship and hospitality, to say naught of the claims of blood and kindred. The evil turn of the Rhodian warfare, some longings to look again at our German fields, for the father-land keeps its hold of us more particularly in adversity, with the habits of an unsettled existence, served to lead me to the castle of Hartenburg; and fairly entered, it will excite no wonder that the guest was ready to lend his sword, in a short foray, to the host. These sallies, as thou well knowest, princely Rudiger, are not so rare as to be deemed miracles."

"What thou sayest is true," returned the Abbot, always speaking as it were aside to the Knight, and manifesting no great surprise at this avowal of principles, that were common enough in that age, and which have descended in a different form to our own, since we daily see men, in the gravest affairs of a nation, putting their morality at the disposal of party, rather than incur the odium of being wanting in this species of social faith. "What thou sayest is very true, and may well furnish thy plea with the Grand Master. Thou mayest on many accounts, too, find this pilgrimage wholesome."

"Doubt it not, reverend Abbot. We had little time during the siege, to pay due attention to the rites; and the general looseness of our lives, since driven from the island, has left long arrears to settle; a fact that I endeavor to remember now."

"And thy associate—he of gentle mien; hath he not also connection with the Church?"

Albrecht turned to whisper the reply.

"'Tis but one that circulates under the frock, holy Benedictine—a youth that hath been the dupe of Lord Emich; for to speak thee fair, my cousin wanteth not of the policy necessary to his condition and to the habits of sage government."

The Abbot smiled in a way to show a good intelligence between him and his companion. After this, they talked apart earnestly for a while, beckoning Monsieur Latouche to make one of their party, after sundry glances in his direction. In the meantime, the general discourse proceeded among the other guests.

"I was sorrowed to hear, reverend Benedictine," proceeded the Count, purposely avoiding the eye of Bonifacius, by addressing himself to one of the brotherhood of Einsiedeln, "that thy community hath refused us masses, for the soul of one that fell in that unhappy dispute which is the cause of our present pleasure, in being in so goodly company. I loved the youth, and would fain deal liberally by those that remember his present necessities."

"Hath the matter been fairly put to those having the right to decide?" demanded the monk, showing by the direction of his eye, that he meant his superior.

"They tell me it hath, and put touchingly; but without success. I trust there has been no hostile interference in this affair, which concerneth no less than a soul, and ought to be dealt by tenderly."

"I know of but one, and that is the Father of Evil himself, that hath an enmity to souls!" answered the monk, with very honest surprise—"As for us, it is our pleasure to be of use on all such occasions; and that especially when the request is preferred by friends of the deceased, that are worthy of so much higher favor."

"Dost thou call those who overturn altars," said Bonifacius, sternly, and with great firmness of voice,—"who visit the temple with the armed hand, and who defy the Church, worthy of her favors!"

"Reverend Abbot!——"

"Nay, let him give his humor vent," said Emich, proudly—"the cold air and a roofless head are apt to move the temper. I would fain have met thee, Bonifacius, in amity, as should have been the case, after our solemn treaty, and all the reparations that are made; but the desire to rule, it would seem, does not abandon thee, even in banishment!"

"Thou art deceived in imagining that I shall forget myself, or my office, rude Emich;

—the question put was to the Benedictine, and not to thee."

"Then let the Benedictine answer. I ask thee, Father, is it becoming or just, that the soul of a youth of good repute, of moral life, and of reasonable earthly hopes, should be refused aid, on the mere grudge of ancient hostility, or haply that there were some passages at his death, that might have been better avoided?"

"The Church must judge for itself, noble Pilgrim, and decide on those rules which regulate its course!"

"By the sainted eleven thousand!—thou forgettest, that all usages have been respected, and that the masses are not asked as the beggar imploreth alms, but that fairly counted gold is proffered in behalf of the youth. If enough has not been done in this way, I swear to thee, Bonifacius, since it would seem thy influence here is so strong, that on my return there shall be further offerings on his account. Berchthold was very dear to me, and I would not have it said that all memory of the boy is lost beneath the ashes of Limburg."

Though both in their several ways were irascible, violent, and unaccustomed to control, neither Emich nor Bonifacius was wanting in that species of self-command, which is so necessary to men intrusted with the care of important interests. They had early learned to bring feeling more or less in subjection to their policy; and though not quite equal to a cold and managed display of indifference on such subjects as too closely crossed their views, it required a certain combination of excitement to induce either, unnecessarily, to betray his true emotions. Their personal intercourse had, in consequence of this affected moderation, been less violent and wrangling than would otherwise have proved, for it did not often happen that both found themselves wrought up to the point of explosion, precisely at the same instant; and he that happened to remain the coolest, stood as a check on the passions of him who had momentarily forgotten appearances. But for this fact, the ill-timed and ill-worded question of the Count might have produced an immediate rupture, to the injury of the pilgrims' interests, and to the great scandal of the brotherhood of Einsiedeln: as it was, however, Bonifacius listened with outward courtesy, and answered more like one that remembered his priestly office than his particular injuries.

"Had it been my good fortune, Herr Pilgrim," he said calmly, "to have remained in charge of altars so esteemed, as to be sought on such a behalf, thy application in favor of the youth would have received meet attention; but thou now addressest a prelate, that, like thee, is indebted to the hospitality of these excellent brothers, for a roof to cover his head."

"Nay, I know not," added the Count, a little confused by this sudden humility, "but rather than desert so young a soul in this strait, and soul of a servitor whom I so much loved, that I would not even now endow some chapel—of a size and decorations suited to his station while living."

"On Limburg Hill, Herr Emich?"

"Nay, excellent Bonifacius, thou forgettest our loving treaty, this pilgrimage, and other conditions honorably fulfilled. Altars can never rise again on Limburg hill, for that were to lose sight of our oaths and promises, which would be a crying sin in both; but altars and chapels may exist elsewhere. Give us then this grace, and look to our gratitude and justice for the reward."

Bonifacius smiled, for he felt his power, and he enjoyed it like a man conscious of having so lately been in the hands of the very baron who now so earnestly beseeched his favor. It may not be easy for one educated in these later days, to understand the singular contradiction which led Emich of Hartenburg, the destroyer of Limburg, thus to entreat a monk; but he who would properly understand his character, must remember the durability of impressions made in youth, the dread mystery that is attached to the unknown future, and, most of all, the flagrant inconsistencies that are always the fruits of a struggle between principles and interests,—between the force of reason and the desires of selfishness.

"Thou accusest me unwarrantably, when thou sayest that our oaths or our loving treaty is forgotten, pious Pilgrim," returned the Benedictine; "both are respected and well remembered, as thou wilt see, in the end. But there is a feature in this request of

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thine, that hath apparently escaped unwittingly one of thy known justice and impartiality. Thy forester is well known for having greatly affected the heresy that is ripe in Germany——"

"Nay, Bonifacius, here must be an error," —interrupted the Count; "thou hast his very mother in our pilgrimage; and dost think a proselyte of Luther would undertake so grievous pain to satisfy Rome?"

"We speak of the child, and not of the parent, Herr Pilgrim. Had all that were trained in better principles observed the opinions of their fathers, our age would have been spared this heresy. Of the boy's irreverence there can be little doubt, since mine own ears have been my witnesses."

"How, hast thou ever shrived the youth, reverend Abbot?" demanded Emich in surprise. "I did not think thee of so great condescension to one of his hopes, nor—by the mass! did I think the youth so weak as to touch on disputed points at the confessional!"

"There are other acknowledgments made, Herr Pilgrim, than those which are heard in the Church, or under the cloak of her mysteries. There was formerly a question between us, noble Count, amicably settled, and in a merry manner that need not now be named."

"Touching certain vineyards!" rejoined Emich, laughing. "The fact is not so distant as to be forgotten, though neither my cousin nor this good Abbé proved as stanch in that matter as had been expected!"

"Thy forester did better service. Thou mayest also remember there were certain discussions then had, and that the bold boy ventured on a comparison of the tree trimmed of its useless branches, and the tree suffered to stand in its deformity."

"Wilt thou abandon a soul to jeopardy for speech light as this, Herr Bonifacius? God's justice! this promiseth but little in mine own behalf, at some future day. Berchthold, heated and warm in the interest of his lord, threw out hints that might otherwise have been spared; moreover, the greater the sinner, Father, the greater need of masses and prayers."

"This will not I gainsay—my objection goeth no farther than to urge that those who are willing to live by the counsels of Luther, should be also willing to seek salvation by his means."

"Friends and pilgrims," said the Abbot of Einsiedeln, approaching the table, from which he had retired a little, to converse more freely with the Abbot and the Knight of Rhodes—"the hour is at hand which has been set to celebrate an early mass in behalf of this pilgrimage. The bell is giving the first summons, and it is meet that we retire to prepare ourselves for the duty."

At this interruption, Bonifacius, who saw a storm gathering, gladly arose, and instantly withdrew; the rest dropped off, according to their several conditions; Emich and his cousin retiring with the leisure of men more accustomed to make others wait, than to hastening their movements to the injury of their own convenience.

After perusing this scene, we admonish the reader to spare his remarks until the subject has been well pondered in his mind. In portraying what passed in the private refectory of the convent of our Lady of the Hermits, we wish to convey no censure on any particular persuasion, or sect, or order of Christians, but simply to exhibit the habits and opinions of the age in which the individuals of this legend existed. Let those who are disposed to be hypercritical, or censorious in their remarks, coolly look around them, and, first making the necessary allowances for the new aspects of society, put the question, whether contradictions as apparent, inconsistencies nearly as irreconcilable with truth, and selfishness almost as gross and as unjust, are not now manifest equally among the adherents of Rome and the proselytes of Luther, as any that have been here represented. We may claim to have improved on the opinions and practices of our predecessors, but we are still far from being the consistent and equitable creatures that, it is to be hoped, we are yet destined to become.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

"Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all."
—*King Henry VI.*

Among the expiations prescribed to the pilgrims of Duerckheim and Hartenburg, there had been included an especial and early morning service, the one to which they were now summoned. Time had been allowed the weaker portion of the party to rest, while stronger had been employed in the manner described in the preceding chapter. Certain self-inflicted stripes it was taken for granted had been duly bestowed, at different periods, during the long journey from the Palatinate.

It was an hour after the separation of the Abbey guests that the procession of Benedictines swept out of the cloisters into the body of the church. Though far from being a community remarkable for the austerity of its practices, it was not unusual for monks of all orders, to quit their pallets on extraordinary occasions, and to break the stillness of night with the music and service of the altar. When the spirit comes thus fresh from repose, and in a disposition suited to the object, into the immediate presence of the Deity, incense and praise so free from the dross of humanity, must come nearer to that high purity which adorns the worship of angels than at any other that can ascend from man, since it is at such a moment that all least feel the burthen of their corporeal adjunct.

Even in the daily parochial duty, the good Catholics still observe a uniformity and rigidity of practice that are unknown even in this land of Puritan origin. The church-bell is heard in every village, with the first dawn of light; at indicated hours, all within hearing of its sound are admonished to recall their thoughts from earth, by addressing a prayer to God; and with the close of day, the flock is once again summoned to the fold, at the service of vespers. These are beautiful and touching memorials of our duty, and when practised in sincerity, cannot fail to keep the mind in better subjection to the great authority that directs all our destinies. In countries where the husbandmen dwell together in villages, the practice is easy, and we hold its loss to be one of the greatest disadvantages of our own diffuse distribution of rural population; a distribution which is also the reason why we must forever be wanting in several other features of social intercourse, that give to life more or less of its poetical charm. Happily there are on the other hand, accompanying advantages that perhaps more than serve as offsets to this, as to most other similar anomalies in our usages.

The arrangements of a Benedictine chapel, and the decorations of its altars, together with the manner in which the brotherhood occupy their stalls in the choir, have been too often mentioned in these pages, to require repetition. Long accustomed to these exercises, the monks were early in their places, though they for whom the mass was to be said were not at all as punctual.

Ulrike and Lottchen, with the rest of the females, entered the church in a body, while the men as is usual in matters that touch the finer feelings, were the last. Emich and the Burgomaster, however, finally made their appearance followed by their companions, the whole betraying by their drowsy air, that they had been endeavoring to sleep off the late repast, and to recover from their fatigue.

During the mass, the companions of Lottchen and Ulrike exhibited exemplary devotion, and a close attention the service; but the gaping of the Count and his circle, the wandering eyes, and finally the profound repose of several, sufficiently showed that the ethereal part of their natures was altogether unequal to the mastery of that which was material.

There was a procession from the choir to the shrine, and prayers were said, as on the previous day, with the eyes of all riveted on the unearthly countenance of Maria. As each was left to judge for himself of the manner in which he discharged his particular duties, there was a very sensible difference in the time occupied by the several devotees, in the performance of the common vows. The females appeared to be embodied with the stone, and there were entire minutes during which their motionless forms would have seemed to be as inanimate as the image on which they gazed, but for the heaving of a breast, or an occasional tremor,—outward and visible signs of the workings of the spirit within. Meta kneeled between her mother

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and Lottchen, her whole soul apparently engrossed in devotion. As she studied the bright eye that gleamed upon her from the depths of that mysterious chapel, illuminated as it was by gorgeous and bright lamps, her fancy transformed the image into a being sainted and blessed by the choice of God; and her own gentle spirit clung to the delusion, as one replete with a hope to cheer her own desolation. She thought of the future, and of the grave; of the rewards of the just, and of Heaven; of that endless eternity and its fruition in which she confided,—and the ties of earth began sensibly to lessen. There was a holy desire to be at rest. But, notwithstanding the spiritual nature of her employment, the form of Berchthold, gay in the green garb of a forester, with laughing eye, light step, and cheerful voice, mingled in all the pictures of her imagination. Now he appeared a saint, robed and bearded, as she had been wont to see those holy men represented in works of art, and yet, by a contradiction wrought by her own heart, always bright and youthful; and now she thought him gifted with wings, and united to the beings of that heavenly choir which had so many representatives around her suspended between the roof and the pavement of the edifice. Singular as it may seem to some of our readers, so busy and so alluring was the working of her imagination at this thrilling moment, that the mourning and affectionate girl had rarely spent an hour of more holy enjoyment than this which she passed before the shrine of our Lady of the Hermits.

Very different were the sensations of Lottchen. Her griefs were those in which the fancy had no share. She wept for the child to which she had given birth; for the stay of her age, and for the pride of her life. No fancy could betray the imagination of a mother, nor could any workings of the mind convert the sad reality into aught but the bitter truth. Still Lottchen found consolation in her prayers. Religious faith was active, though imagination slumbered; for nothing can be more different than the delusions of the one, and the deep-sustained convictions of the other; and she was able to find a solace for her sorrow, by looking with calm, Christian hope beyond the interests of life.

The sentiments and feelings of Ulrike differed from those of her friend only in the degree, and in the peculiarity of those circumstances which directed her maternal solicitude to a still living object. But Ulrike, kind, true, and warm of heart, had tenderly regarded the lost Berchthold. Had there been no other motive than the fact of his being the offspring of Lottchen, she could not have been indifferent to him; but, accustomed, as she had been for years, to look forward to his union with Meta, she felt his loss little less than she would have mourned over that of a child of her own.

Not so with Heinrich. The bold and spirited support he received from Berchthold during the assault, had sensibly won upon his esteem, for the affinities between the brave are amongst the strongest; but the Burgomaster had not passed a life in the indulgence of a passion so engrossing, and so incurable, as the love of gain, readily to cast aside all his intentions and objects, at the impulse of a purely generous feeling. He would freely have given of his beloved stores to the youth; but to bestow Meta was, in his eyes, to bestow all, and, under his habits, it seemed to be giving gold without an equivalent, to give his daughter's hand to a penniless husband. There are some who accumulate for the advantages that are incidental to wealth; others hoard under the goadings of an abstract and nearly inexplicable passion; while another set heap together their means, as boys roll up snow, with a delight in witnessing how large a mass may be collected by their agency. Heinrich was of the latter class, subject, however, to a relish for the general results of wealth, and, like all men who deem money as an end and not as a means, he was in the practice of considering the last measure of his policy, which was intended to double the stock by the marriage of his daughter, as the happiest and the greatest stroke of a fortunate and prosperous life. And yet Heinrich Frey had his moments of strong natural feeling, and the manner in which Meta mourned for the death of Berchthold touched him, to a degree that might have disposed him to say he regretted the fate of his young lieutenant as much on her account as on his own. It is more than probable, however, could Bercht-

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hold have been suddenly restored to life, that the Burgomaster would have returned to his former mode of thinking, and would have thought the resuscitation of the young forester sufficient, of itself, to assuage the grief of a whole family.

Heinrich and the Count were among the first to quit their suppliant attitudes before the shrine. They had each said the required number of prayers, and brushing their knees, the two pilgrims strolled away, deeper into the body of the church, like men well satisfied with themselves. But, while so ready to give relief to his own bones, the Burgomaster kept a vigilant eye on Dietrich, who, being a hired penitent, was expected to give Duerckheim the full worth of its money, in the way of mortifications and *aves*.

Most of the lights in the choir had been extinguished, and the aisles of the edifice were dimly visible, by means of a few scattered candles, that burned almost without ceasing, before the altars of different subordinate chapels. As they walked down the great aisle, Emich slowly laid a hand on the shoulder of his companion, seeming to invite his close attention, by the grave and meaning manner of the action.

"I could wish that our poor Berchthold, after all, had the virtue of masses from these servitors of our Lady of the Hermits!" said the Count. "If there be especial savor in any of this description of prayers, methinks it must be among men who watch a shrine of which they tell all these miracles!"

"Your wish, nobly born brother Pilgrim and friend, is but the expression of mine own. To own the truth, I have thought of little else, while going through the *aves*, but to devise the means of persuading the holy Abbot, at a reasonable rate, to change his mind, and honestly to let the youth's soul benefit by his intercessions."

"Thou hast not well bethought thee altogether, friend Heinrich, of thine own errand here!"

"Sapperment! What would you, Herr Emich, from a man of my years and education? One gets to be so ready with the words by oft repeating, that going through the beads is much like tapping with a finger while the eye looks over an account. But to speak of the boy—were we to bid higher for these masses, it might raise the present price, and we be uselessly losers; for, as I understand the question, the amount given in no manner changes the true value of the intercession to the defunct."

"Heinrich," returned the Count, musingly, "they say that Brother Luther denounces these *post-mortem* prayers, as vain and of none avail!"

"That would alter the case greatly, Lord Count and brother Pilgrim. One could wish to be sure in an affair of this delicacy, for if the monk of Wittenberg hath reason of his side, we lose our gold; and if he hath wrong, the soul of Berchthold may be none the better for our doubts!"

"We laymen are sorely pressed between the two opinions, worthy Burgomaster, and I could fain wish that these reformers would bring the question speedily to a conclusion. By the mass! there are moments when I am ready to throw away the rosary, and to take Duke Friedrich of Saxony's side of the question, as being the most reasonable and manly. But then, again, should he prove wrong, thou know'st, Heinrich, we lose the benefit of chapels built, of *aves* said, of gold often paid, and the high protection of Rome! Thou seest the strait of poor Berchthold, and this only for some little freedom of discourse!"

Heinrich sighed, for he felt the force of the dilemma, and he appeared to ponder well before he answered. Edging nearer to the Count, like a man who felt he was about to utter dangerous sentiments in a delicate situation, he whispered the reply.

"Here, Emich," he said, "we are but dust, and that of no very excellent quality. The potter's ware hath its utility, if well baked and otherwise prepared; but of what use is a man when the breath hath departed? They say the soul remains, and that it must be cared for, neither of which will I dispute; but is it reasonable to buy out a patent of salvation, for an intangible thing, with current coin? Look to that knave, the smith! —Your pardon, nobly-born Count—but here hath our town engaged the rogue to do penance in its behalf, and my eyes are no sooner off him than his lips become as stationary as the wings of a mill in a calm. Duty to Duerckheim demands that I should give him a jog, after which, with your gracious leave,

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we will look further into the philosophy of that in which we were dealing."

So saying, the zealous Heinrich hurried down the aisle towards his religious mercenary, with a laudable and sensitive watchfulness over the interests of his constituents. He found the smith perfectly immovable, and it was only by repeated and vigorous shakes, that he succeeded in arousing his auxiliary from a profound slumber.

In the meanwhile, Emich walked on, still occupied by his reflections. On reaching the gate of the choir, he was about to retrace his steps, when he was privately beckoned, by one whose dusky form appeared at a side door of the church, to draw nearer. On approaching, Emich found that his old rival, Bonifacius, awaited his coming.

The salutatious of these ancient enemies were courteous, but distant. After a short parley, however, they withdrew in company; and it was past the turn of the day, ere the Count of Hartenburg reappeared among the pilgrims. The details of what passed in this secret conference were never known to the public, though subsequent events gave reason to believe that they had reference to the final settlement of the long-contested existence of Limburg in the Jaegerthal. It was known generally in the Abbey, that the Abbot Rudiger made one of the council, and that its termination was friendly. Those who were disposed to be critical, intimated in after days, that in this dispute, as in most others in which the weak and humble lend themselves to the views of the great and the strong, they for whom the battle had been fought, and whose apparently implacable enmities had sown discord among their followers, suddenly found means to appease their resentments, and to still the tempest they had raised, in such a manner as to suffer most of its consequences to fall on the heads of their allies. This result, which appears to be universal with those who have the imprudence to connect themselves indissolubly with friends who can irretrievably dispose of their destinies, was perhaps to be looked for, since the man or the community that is so weak as to confide too implicitly in the faith of the powerful, whether considered individually or as nations, may at once consider itself a tool to favor views that have little connection with its own interests. In cases of this nature, men are wont to share the fate of the orange-skin, which is thrown away after being sucked; and communities themselves are apt to undergo some such changes as those which mark the existence of the courser, which is first pampered and caressed, then driven upon the pole, and which commonly ends its career at the plow.

During the time Bonifacius and Emich were arranging their secret treaty, in the best manner that the former could hope for, in the actual state of Germany, and to the entire satisfaction of the latter, the ceremonies of the expiation proceeded. Aroused from his sleep, Dietrich endeavored to compensate for lost time by renewed diligence, and the Burgomaster himself, apprehensive that the negligence of the hireling might bring a calamity on the town, joined himself to the party, with as much zeal as if he had as yet done nothing towards effecting the object of their journey.

The sun had fallen far towards the west, when the pilgrims finally took their departure for the Palatinate. Father Arnolph was again at their head, and, blessed by the Abbot, and in favor with the Church, the whole went their way, if not with lightened hearts, at least with bodies much refreshed, with hopes rekindled and with packs materially diminished in size.

Ulrike and Lottchen paused when they reached the boundary of the plain, where they could command a parting view of the Abbey. Here they, and Meta, and indeed most of the party, prayed long and fervently; or at least so seemed to pray. When they arose from their knees, the Prior, whose whole time while at the convent had been deeply occupied by religious exercises, and whose spirit had been refreshed, in a degree proportioned to his sincerity and faith, came to the side of the principal group of the females, his eye beaming with holy hope, and his face displaying innate peace of mind.

"Ye are now, daughters, about to take leave, forever, of the shrine of our Lady of the Hermits," he said. "If ye have seen aught to lessen the high expectation with which the pious are apt to draw near this sacred altar, ascribe it to that frailty which is inherent in the nature of man; and if ye have

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reaped consolation and encouragement from your offerings and prayers, ye may, with all security, impute it to the goodness of God. And thou, my child," he added with paternal tenderness, addressing Meta—"thou hast been sorely tried in thy young life—but God is with thee, as He is in yon blue sky—in that sun of molten gold—in yonder icy pile that props the heavens, and in al His works, that are so glorious in our eyes! Turn with me to yonder mountain, that from its form is called the Mitre. Regard it well—Dost see aught in particular?"

"'Tis an abrupt and dreary pile of rock, Father," answered Meta.

"Seest thou naught else—on its highest summit?"

Meta looked intently, for in sooth there did appear on the uppermost pinnacle of the mass an object so small, and so like a line, that, at first, she passed a hand across her eye to remove a floating hair from before her sight.

"Father!" exclaimed the girl, clasping her hands fervently, "I behold a cross!"

"That rock is the type of God's durable justice;—that cross is the pledge of His grace and love. Go thy way, daughter, and have hope."

The pilgrims turned and descended the mountain in musing silence. That evening they crossed the lake, and slept within the ancient walls of the romantic town of Rapperschwyl. On the following day, the pilgrimage being now happily accomplished, they proceeded toward their own distant habitations, descending the Rhine in boats.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"But thou art clay—and canst but comprehend
That which was clay, and such thou shalt behold."
—*Cain.*

THE return of the pilgrims was a happy moment to all who dwelt in Duerckheim. Many prayers had been offered in their behalf, during the long absence, and divers vague reports of their progress and success had been eagerly swallowed by their friends and townsmen. When, however, the Burgomaster and his companions were actually seen entering their gates, the good citizens ran to and fro, in troubled delight, and the greetings, especially among the gentler sex, were mingled with many tears. Emich and his followers did not appear, having taken a private path to the Castle of Hartenburg.

The simple and still Catholic (though wavering) burghers had felt many doubts concerning the fruits of their bold policy, while the expiatory penance was pending. Their town was in the midst of a region that is perhaps more pregnant with wild legends, even at this hour, than any other of equal extent in Europe; and it can be easily conceived that, under such circumstances, the imaginations of a people who had been, as it were, nurtured in superstition, would not be likely to slumber. In effect, numberless startling rumors were rife, in the town, the valley, and on the plain. Some spoke of fiery crosses gleaming at night above the walls of the fallen Abbey; others whispered of midnight chants and spectre-like processions, that had been heard or seen among the ruined towers; while one peasant, in particular, asseverated that he had held discourse with the spirit of Father Johan. These tales found credulous auditors or not, according to the capacity of the listener; and to these may be added another, that was accompanied by such circumstances of confirmation, as are apt momentarily to affect the minds of those, even, who are little wont to lend attention to any incidents of miraculous nature.

A peasant, in crossing the chase by a retired path, was said to have encountered Berchthold, clad in his dress of green, wearing the hunting-horn and cap, and girded with the usual *couteau-de-chasse*, or, in fine, much as he was first presented to the reader in our early pages. The youth was described to have been hot on the chase of a roebuck, and flushed with exercise. From time to time, he was said to wind his horn. The hounds were near, obedient as usual to his call, and indeed the vision was described as partaking of most of the usual accompaniments of the daily exercise of the forester.

Had the tale ended here, it might have passed off among the thousand other similar wonderful sights that were then related in that wonder-loving country, and been forgotten. But it was accompanied with positive circumstances, that addressed themselves, in

a manner not to be disputed, to the senses. The two favorite hounds of the forester had been missing for some weeks, and, from time to time, cries resembling theirs were unequivocally heard, ringing among the arches of the forest, and filling the echoes of the mountains.

This extraordinary confirmation of the tale of the boor occurred the week preceding the return of the pilgrims. The latter found their townsmen under a strong excitement from this cause, for that very day, nearly half the population of Duerckheim had been into the pass of the Haart, which was described in the opening chapter of this work, and with their own ears had heard the deep baying of the hounds. It was only after the first felicitations of the return were over, and during the night which followed, that the pilgrims learned this unusual circumstance. It reached Emich himself, however, ere his foot crossed the threshold of his castle.

On the following day, Duerckheim presented a picture of pleased but troubled excitement. Its population was happy in the return of their chosen and best, but troubled with the marvellous incident of the dogs, and by the wild rumors that accompanied it; rumors which thickened every hour by corroborating details from different sources. Early that very morning a new occurrence helped to increase the excitement.

From the moment that the Abbey was destroyed, not an individual had dared to enter its tottering walls. Two peasants of the Jaegerthal, incited by cupidity, had indeed secretly made the attempt, but they returned with the report of strange sights, and of fearful groans existing within the consecrated pile. The rumor of this failure, together with a lingering respect for altars that had been so long reverenced, effectually secured the spot against all similar expeditions. The alarm spread to the Heidenmauer, for, by a confusion of incidents, that is far from unusual in popular rumors, an account of Ilse, concerning the passage of the armed band through the cedars, on the night of the assault, coupled with the general distrust that was attached to the place, had been so perverted and embellished as effectually to leave the ancient camp to its solitude. Some said that even the spririts of the Pagans had been aroused by the sacrilege, from the sleep of centuries, and other argued that, as the Hermit was known to have perished in the conflagration, it was a spot accursed. The secret of the true name, and of the history of the Anchorite, was now generally known, and men so blended the late events with former offences, as to create a theory to satisfy their own longings for the marvellous; though, as is usual in most of these cases of supernatural agency, it might not have stood the test of a severe logical and philosophical investigation.

During the night which succeeded the return of the pilgrims, there had been a grave consultation among the civic authorities, on the subject of all these extraordinary tales and spectacles. The alarm had reached an inconvenient point, and the best manner of quieting it was now gravely debated. There was not a burgher present at the discussion, who felt himself free from the general uneasiness; but men, and especially men in authority, ordinarily choose to affect a confidence they are frequently far from feeling. In this spirit, then, was the matter discussed and decided. We shall refer to the succeeding events for the explanation.

Just as the sun began to shed his warmth into the valley, the people of Duerckheim, with few exceptions, collected without that gate which the Count of Hartenburg had so unceremoniously forced. Here they were marshalled by citizens appointed to that duty, in the usual order of a religious procession. In front went the pilgrims, to whom an especial virtue was attached, in consequence of their recent journey; then came the parochial clergy, with the ordinary emblems of Catholic worship; the burghers succeeded, and last of all followed the women and children, without much attention to order. When all were duly arranged, the crowd proceeded, accompanied by a chant of the choristers, and taking the direction of Limburg.

"This is a short pilgrimage, brother Dietrich," said the Burgomaster, who in his quality of a Christian of a peculiar savor was still associated with the smith, "and little likely to weary the limbs; still had the town been as active and true as we who have visited the mountains, this little affair of a few barking hounds, and some midnight moans in the Ab-

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bey ruins, would have been ready settled to our hands. But a town without its head, is like a man without his reason."

"You count on an easy deliverance then, honorable Heinrich, from this outcry of devils and unbidden guests! For mine own particular exercises, I will declare that, though sufficiently footsore with what hath already been done, I could wish the journey were longer, and the enemy more human."

"Go to, smith; thou art not to believe above half of what thou hast heard. The readiness to give faith to idle rumors forms a chief distinction between the vagrant and the householder—the man of weakness, and the man of wisdom. Were it decent, between a magistrate and an artisan, I would hold thee some hazards of coin, now, that this affair turns out very different from what thou expectest; and I do not account thee, Dietrich, an every-day swallower of lies."

"If your worship would but hint what a fair-dealing man ought in truth to believe——"

"Why, look you, smith, here is all that I expect from the inquiry, though we hunt and exercise for a month. It will be found that there is no pack of hounds at all, loose or in leash, but at most a dog or two, that may be beset or not, as the case shall prove; next, thou wilt see that this tale of Father Johan chasing young Berchthold, while the boy hunts a roebuck, is altogether an invention, since the monk was the last man to give loose to such a scampering, noisy device; as for the forester, my life on it, his appearance too will end in footmarks, or perhaps some other modest sign that he desires the masses refused by the Benedictines; for I know not the youth that would be less likely needlessly to disturb a neighborhood, with his own particular concerns, than Berchthold Hintermayer, living or dead."

A general start, and a common murmur among his companions, caused Heinrich to terminate his explanations. The head of the procession had reached the gorge, and as it was about to turn into the valley, the trampling of many hoofs became audible. Feelings so highly wrought were easily excited to a painful degree, and the common expectation, for the moment, seemed to be some supernatural exhibition. A whirlwind of dust swept round the point of the hill, and Count Emich, with a train of well-mounted followers, appeared from its cloud. It was so common to meet religious processions of this nature, that the Count would not have manifested surprise, had he been ignorant of the motive which induced the population of Duerckheim to quit its walls; but, already apprised of their intentions, he hastily dismounted and approached the Burgomaster, cap in hand.

"Thou goest to exercise, worshipful Heinrich," he said, "and love for my town hath quickened our steps, that no honor or attention should be wanting to those I love,—hast a place among thy pilgrims for a poor baron and his friends?"

The offer was gladly accepted, courage being quickened by every appearance of succor. Emich, though equipped as a cavalier, was therefore willingly received among his fellow-travellers. The delay caused by this interruption ended, the procession, or rather the throng, for eagerness and anxiety and curiosity had nearly broken all order, proceeded toward the ascent of the mountain.

The ruins of Limburg, then recent and still blackened with smoke, were found in the deep silence of utter desertion. To judge from appearances, not a footstep had trodden them, since the moment when the band of the assailants had last poured through the gates, after a tumultuous triumph which had been so chilled by the awful catastrophe of the falling roofs. If that party had drawn near the Abbey in expectation of a sudden and furious assault, this slowly advanced with a troubled apprehension of witnessing some fearful manifestation of superhuman power. Both were disappointed. The unresisted success of the assailants is known, and the procession now proceeded with the same impunity; though many a voice faltered in the chant as they entered the spoiled and desolate church. Nothing, however, occurred to justify their alarm.

Encouraged by this pacific tranquillity, and desirous of giving proofs of their personal superiority to vulgar terrors, the Count and Heinrich commanded the throng to remain in the great aisle of the church, while they proceeded together into the choir. They found the usual evidences of a fierce conflagration

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at every step, but nothing to create surprise, until they arrived at the mouldering altar.

"Himmel!" exclaimed the Burgomaster, hastily pulling back his noble friend by the cloak,—"your foot was about to do disreverence to the bones of a Christian, my Lord Count!—For Christian Father Johan was, beyond all question, though one more given to damnation than to charity."

Emich recoiled, for he saw in truth that, with heedless step, he had been near crushing these revolting remnants of mortality.

"Here died a wild enthusiast!" he said, moving the skeleton with the point of his sheathed sword.

"And here he is still, nobly-born Graf!—This settles the question of the monk chasing young Berchthold through the forest, and among the cedars of the Heidenmauer, and it would be well to show these remains to the people."

The hint was improved, and the throng was summoned to bear witness that the bones of Johan still lay on the precise spot in which he had died. While the curious and the timid were whispering their opinions of this discovery, the two leaders descended to the crypt.

This portion of the edifice had suffered least by the fire. Protected by the superior pavement, and constructed altogether of stone, it had received no very material injury, but that which had been inflicted by the sledges of the invaders. Fragments of the tombs lay scattered on every side, and here and there a wreath of smoke had left its mark upon the wall; but Emich saw with regret, that he owed the demolition of the altar, and of the other memorials of his race, entirely to his own precipitation.

"I will cause the bones of my fathers to be interred elsewhere," he said, musingly:—"this is no sepulchre for an honored stock!"

"Umph!—They have long and creditably decayed where they lie, Herr Emich, and it would have been well had they been left beneath the cover of their ancient marbles; but our partisans showed unusual agility in this part of their toil, in honor, no doubt, of an illustrious house."

"None of my race shall sleep within walls accursed by Benedictines! Hark!—what movement is that above, good Heinrich?"

"The townsmen have doubtless fallen upon the bones of the hermit, and of young Berchthold. Shall we go up, Lord Count, and see that fitting reverence be paid their remains? The forester has claims upon us all, and as for Odo von Ritterstein, his crime would be deemed all the lighter in these days, moreover he was betrothed to Ulrike in their youth."

"Heinrich, thy wife was very fair;—she had many suitors!"

"I cry your mercy, noble Count; I never heard but of poor Odo, and myself. The former was put out of the question by his own madness, and as for the latter, he is such as Heaven was pleased to make him; an indifferent lover and husband if you will, but a man of some credit and substance among his equals."

The Count did not care to dispute the possession of these qualities with his friend, and they left the crypt, with a common desire to pay proper respect to the remains of poor Berchthold. To their mutual surprise the church was found deserted. By the clamor of voices without, however, it was easy to perceive that some extraordinary incident had drawn away the members of the procession, in a body. Curious to have so violent an interruption of the proceedings explained, the two chiefs, for Heinrich was still entitled to be so styled, hastened down the great aisle, picking their way among fallen fragments, towards the great door. Near the latter, they were again shocked by the spectacle of the charred skeleton of Johan, which seemingly had been dropped under the impulse of some sudden and great confusion.

"Himmel!" muttered the Burgomaster, while he hurried after his leader, "they have deserted the bones of the Benedictine!—can it be, Lord Emich, that some fiery miracle, after all our unbelief, hath wrought this fear?"

Emich made no reply, but issued into the court with the air of an offended master. The first glimpse, however, that he caught of the group, which now thronged the ruined walls of the minor buildings, whence there was a view of the surrounding country, and particularly of parts of the adjacent hill of the Heidenmauer, convinced him that the present was no moment to exhibit displeas-

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ure. Climbing up a piece of fallen stone-work, he found himself on a fragment of wall, surrounded by fifty silent, wondering countenances, among whom he recognized several of his own most trusty followers.

"What meaneth this disrespect of the service, and so sudden an abandonment of the remains of the monk?" demanded the baron,—vainly looking about him, in the hope of finding some quicker explanation by means of his own eyes.

"Hath not my Lord the Count seen and heard?" muttered the nearest vassal.

"What—knave? I have seen naught, but pallid and frightened fools, nor heard more than beating hearts! Wilt thou explain this, varlet—for, though something of a rogue, thou, at least, art no coward?"

Emich addressed himself to Gottlob.

"It may not be so easy of explanation as is thought, Lord Count," returned the cow-herd gravely; "the people have come hither with this speed, inasmuch as the cries of the supernatural dogs have been heard, and some say the person of poor Berchthold hath been again seen!"

The Count smiled contemptuously, though he knew the speaker sufficiently well to be surprised at the concern which was very unequivocally painted in his face.

"Thou wert attached to my forester?"

"Lord Emich, we were friends, if one of so humble station may use the word, when speaking of a youth that served so near the person of our master. Like his, my own family once knew better days, and we often met in the chase, which I was wont to cross, coming or going to the pastures. I loved poor Berchthold, nobly-born Count, and still love his memory."

"I believe thou hast better stuff in thee than some idle and silly deeds would give reason to believe. I have remembered thy good will on various occasions, and especially thy cleverness in making the signals on the night these walls were overturned, and thou wilt find thyself named to the employment left vacant by my late forester's unhappy end."

Gottlob endeavored to thank his master, but he was too much troubled by real grief for the loss of his friend, to find consolation in his own preferment.

"My services are my Lord Count's," he answered, "but, though ready to do as commanded, I could well wish that Berchthold were here to do that for me, which——"

"Listen!—Hark!"—cried a hundred voices.

Emich started, and bent forward in fixed attention. The day was clear and cloudless, and the air of the hills pure as a genial breeze and a bright sun could bestow. Favored by such circumstances, and amid a silence that was breathing and eloquent, there were borne across the valley the well-known cries of hounds on the scent. In that region and age none dared hunt, and indeed none possessed the means of hunting, but the feudal lord. Since the late events, his chases had been unentered with this view, and the death of Berchthold, who had especial privileges in this respect, had left them without another who might dare to imitate his habits.

"This is at least bold!" said Emich, when the cries had passed away; "hath any other near dogs of that noble breed?"

"We never heard of other!"

"None would dare use them," were the answers.

"I know those throats—they are, of a certainty, the favorite hounds of my poor forester! Have not the dogs escaped the leash, to play their gambols at will among the deer?"

"In that case, Lord Count, would tried hounds remain abroad for weeks?" answered Gottlob. "It is now a sennight since these cries have been first heard, and yet no one has seen the dogs, from that hour to this, unless as some one of our hinds says they have in sooth been seen running madly on the scent."

"'Tis said, mein Herr Graf," put in another, "that Berchthold, himself, hath been viewed in their company, his garments floating in the wind, while he flew along, keeping even pace with the dogs, an' he had been swift of foot as they!"

"With Father Johan at his heels, cowl undone and robe streaming like a pennon, by way of religious amusement!" added the Count, laughing. "Dost not see, dotard, that the crackling bones of thy monk are still in the ruin?"

The hind was daunted by his master's

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manner, but nothing convinced. There then succeeded a long and expecting silence, for this little by-play near the Count had not in the least affected the solemn attention of the mass. At length the throats of these mysterious dogs again opened, and the cries indeed appeared like those of hounds rushing from beneath the cover of woods into the open air. In a few moments they were repeated, and beyond all dispute, they were now upon the open hearth that surrounded the Teufelstein. The crisis grew alarming for the local superstitions of such a place, in the commencement of the sixteenth century. Even Emich wavered. Though he had a vague perception of the inconsistency of living dogs being hunted by a dead forester, still there were so many means of getting over this immaterial difficulty, when the greater point of the supernatural chase was admitted, that he found little relief in the objection. Descending from the wall, he was in the act of beckoning the priests and Heinrich to his side, when a general shout arose among the male spectators, while the women rushed in a body around Ulrike, who was kneeling, with Lottchen and Meta, before the great crucifix of the ancient court of the convent. In the twinkling of an eye, Emich reoccupied his place on the wall, which shook with the impetus of his heavy rush.

"What meaneth this disrespectful tumult?" angrily demanded the baron.

"The hounds!—mein Herr Graf!—the hounds!" answered fifty breathless peasants.

"Explain this outcry, Gottlob."

"My Lord Count, we have seen the dogs leaping past yonder margin of the hill—here—just in a line with the spot where the Teufelstein lies. I know the dear animals well, Herr Emich, and believe me, they are truly the old favorites of Berchthold!"

"And Berchthold!" continued one or two of the more decided lovers of the marvellous—"we saw the late forester, great Emich, bounding after the dogs, an' he had wings!"

The matter grew serious, and the Count slowly descended to the court, determined to bring the affair to some speedy explanation.

CHAPTER XXX.

"By the Apostle Paul, shadows to-night
Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard,
Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers."
—*Richard III.*

THE consultation that now took place was between the principal laymen. The connection which the Church had so long maintained with supernatural agencies determined Emich, who was jealous of its again obtaining its lost ascendency in that country, to exclude the officiating priests altogether from the decision he was about to take. Were we to say that the Count of Hartenburg gave full faith to the rumors concerning the spirit of his late forester having been seen engaged in the chase, as when in the flesh, we should probably not do entire credit to his intelligence and habits of thinking; but were we to say that he was altogether free from superstition and alarm on this difficult point, we should attribute to him a degree of philosophy and a mental independence which in that age were the property only of the learned and reflecting, and not always even of them. Astrology, in particular, had taken strong hold of the imaginations of those who even pretended to general science; and when the mind once admits of theories of a character so little in accordance with homely reason, it opens the avenues to a multitude of collateral weaknesses of the same nature, which seem to follow as the necessary corollaries of the main proposition.

The necessity of a prompt solution of the question was admitted by all of those whom the Count consulted. Many had begun to whisper that the extraordinary visitation was a consequence of the sacrilege, and that it was hopeless to expect peace, or exemption from supernatural plagues, until the Benedictines were restored to their Abbey and their former rights. Though Emich felt convinced that this idea came originally from the monks, through some of their secret and paid agents, he saw no manner of defeating it so effectually as that of demonstrating the falsity of the rumor. In our time, and in this land, a weapon that was forged by a miracle would be apt to become useless of itself; but in the other hemisphere there still exist entire countries that are yet partially governed by agents of this description. At the period of the tale,

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the public mind was so uninstructed and dependent that the very men who were most interested in defeating the popular delirium of the hour, had great difficulty in overcoming their own doubts. It has been seen that Emich, though much disposed to throw off the dominion of the Church, so far clung to his ancient prejudices as secretly to distrust the very power he was about to defy, and to entertain grave scruples not only of the policy, but of the lawfulness of the step his ambition had urged him to adopt. In this manner does man become the instrument of the various passions and motives that beset him, now yielding, or now struggling to resist, as a stronger inducement is presented to his mind; always professing to be governed by reason and constrained by principles, while in truth he rarely consents to consult the one, or to respect the other, until both are offered through the direct medium of some engrossing interest that requires an immediate and active attention. Then indeed his faculties become suddenly enlightened, and he eagerly presses into his service every argument that offers, the plausible as well as the sound; and thus it happens that we frequently see whole communities making a moral pirouette in a breath, adopting this year a set of principles that are quite in opposition to all they had ever before professed. Fortunately, all that is thus gained on sound principles is apt to continue, since whatever may be the waywardness of those who profess them, principles themselves are immutable, and when once fairly admitted, are not easily dispossessed by the bastard doctrines of expediency and error. These changes are gradual as respects those avant-couriers of thought, who prepare the way for the advance of nations, but who, in general, so far precede their contemporaries, as to be utterly out of view at the effectual moment of the reformation, or revolution, or by whatever name these sudden summersets are styled; but as respects the mass, they often occur by a coup-de-main; an entire people awakening, as it were, by magic, to the virtues of a new set of maxims, much as the eye turns from the view of one scenic representation to that of its successor.

Our object in this tale is to represent society, under its ordinary faces, in the act of passing from the influence of one set of governing principles to that of another. Had our efforts been confined to the workings of a single and a master mind, the picture, however true as regards the individual, would have been false in reference to a community; since such a study would have been no more than following out the deductions of philosophy and reason—something the worse, perhaps, for its connection with humanity; whereas, he that would represent the world, or any material portion of the world, must draw the passions and the more vulgar interests in the boldest colors, and be content with portraying the intellectual part in a very subdued back-ground. We know not that any will be disposed to make the reflection that our labors are intended to suggest, and without which they will scarcely be useful; but, while we admit the imperfection of what has been here done, we feel satisfied that he who does consider it coolly and in candor, will be disposed to allow that our picture is sufficiently true for its object.

We have written in vain, should it now be necessary to dwell on the nature of the misgivings that harassed the minds of the Count and Heinrich, as they descended the hill of Limburg at the head of the new procession. Policy, and the determination to secure advantages that had been so dearly obtained, urged them on; while doubt and all the progeny of ancient prejudices contributed to their distrust.

The people advanced much in the same order as that in which they had ascended to the ruins of the Abbey. The pilgrims were in front, followed closely by the parochial priests and their choirs; while the rest succeeded in an eager, trembling, curious, and devout crowd. Religious change existed, as yet, rather in doctrine, and among the few, than in the practices of the many; and all the rites, it will be remembered, were those usually observed by the Church of Rome on an occasion of exorcism, or of an especial supplication to be released from a mysterious display of Heaven's displeasure. The Count and Heinrich, as became their stations, walked boldly in advance; for, whatever might have been the extent and nature of their distrust, it was wisely and successfully concealed from all but themselves—even the worthy Burgomaster entertained a respectful

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opinion of the noble's firmness, and the latter much wondering at a man of Heinrich's education and habits of life being able to show a resolution that he thought more properly belonged to philosophy. They passed up toward the plain of the Heidenmauer, by the hollow way that has already been twice mentioned in these pages—once in the Introduction, and again as the path by which Ulrike descended on her way to the Abbey, on the night of its destruction. Until near the summit, nothing occurred to create new uneasiness; and as the choristers increased the depth of their chant, the leaders began to feel a vague hope of escaping from farther interruption. As the moments passed, the Count breathed freer, and he already fancied that he had proved the Heidenmauer to be a spot as harmless as any other in the Palatinate.

"You have often pricked courser over this wild common of the Devil, noble and fearless Count," said Heinrich, when they drew near the margin of the superior plain. "One so accustomed to its view is not easily troubled by the cries and vagaries of a leash of uneasy dogs, though they might be kennelled beneath the shades of the Teufelstein!"

"Thou mayest well say often, good Heinrich. When but an urchin, my excellent father was wont to train his chargers on this height, and it was often my pleasure to be of the party. Then our hunts frequently drove the deer from the cover of the chases to this open ground——"

The Count paused, for a swift, pattering rush, like that of the feet of hounds beating the ground, was audible, just above their heads, though the edge of the mountain still kept the face of the level ground from being seen. Spite of their resolution, the two leaders came to a dead halt—a delay which those in the rear were compelled to imitate.

"The common hath its tenants, Herr Frey," said Emich, gravely, but in a tone of a man resolute to struggle for his rights; "it will soon be seen if they are disposed to admit the sovereignty of their feudal lord."

Without waiting for an answer, the Count spite of himself muttered an *ave*, and mounted with sturdy limbs to the summit. The first glance was rapid, uneasy, and distrustful; but nothing rewarded the look. The naked rock of the Teufelstein lay in the ancient bed—where it had probably been left, by some revolution of the earth's crust, three thousand years before—gray, solitary, and weather-worn as at this hour; the grassy common had not a hoof or foot over the whole of its surface; and the cedars of the deserted camp sighed in the breeze, as usual, dark, melancholy, and suited to the traditions which had given them interest.

"Here is nothing!" said the Count, drawing a heavy breath, which he would fain ascribe to the difficulty of the ascent.

"Herr von Hartenburg, God is here, as he is among the hills we have already quitted—on that fair and wide plain below—and in thy hold——"

"Prithee, good Ulrike, we will of this another time. We touch now on the destruction of a silly legend, and of some recent alarms."

At a wave of his hand the procession proceeded, taking the direction of the ancient gateway of the camp, the choir renewing its chant, and the same leaders always in advance.

It is not necessary to say that the Heidenmauer was approached on this solemn occasion with beating hearts. No man of reflection and proper feeling can ever visit a spot like this without fancying a picture that is fraught with pleasing melancholy. The certainty that he has before his eyes the remains of a work, raised by the hands of beings who existed so many centuries before him in that great chain of events which unites the past with the present, and that his feet tread earth that has been trodden equally by the Roman and the Hun, is sufficient of itself to raise a train of thought allied to the wonderful and grand. But to these certain and natural sensations was now added a dread of omnipotence and the apprehension of instantly witnessing some supernatural effect.

Not a word was uttered, until Emich and the Burgomaster turned to pass the pile of stones which mark the position of the ancient wall, by means of the gateway already named, when the former, encouraged by the tranquillity, again spoke.

"The ear is often a treacherous companion, friend Burgomaster," he said, "and like the tongue, unless duly watched, may lead

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to misunderstandings. No doubt we both thought, at the moment, that we heard the feet of hounds beating the earth, as on a hunt; thou now seest, by means of one sense, that the other hath served us false. But we approach the end of our little pilgrimage, and we will halt, while I speak the people in explanation of our opinions and intentions."

Heinrich gave the signal, and the choir ceased its chant, while the crowd drew near to listen. The Count both saw and felt that he touched the real crisis, in the furtherance of his own views, as opposed to those of the brotherhood, and he determined, by a severe effort, not only to overcome his enemies, but himself. In this mood, he spoke.

"Ye are here, my honest friends and vassals," he commenced, "both as the faithful who respect the usefulness of the altar when rightly served, and as men who are disposed to see and judge for themselves. This camp, as ye witness by its remains, was once occupied by armed bands of warriors who, in their day, fought and fortified, suffered and were happy, bled and died, conquered or were vanquished, much as we see those who carry arms in our own time, perform these several acts, or submit to those several misfortunes. The report that their spirits frequent this spot, is as little likely to be true, as that the spirits of all who have fallen with arms in their hands remain near the earth that hath swallowed their blood; a belief that would leave no place in our fair Palatinate without its ghostly tenant. As for this late alarm, concerning my forester, poor Berchthold Hintermayer, it is the less probable from the character of the youth, who well knew when living the disrelish I have for all such tales, and my particular desire to banish them altogether from the Jaegerthal, as well as from his known modesty and dutiful obedience. You see plainly that here are no dogs——"

Emich met with a startling contradiction. Just as his tongue, which was getting fluent with the impunity that had so far attended his declarations, uttered the latter word, the long drawn cries of hounds were heard. Fifty strong German exclamations escaped the crowd, which waved like a troubled sea. The sounds came from among the trees in the very centre of the dreaded Heidenmauer, and seemed only the more unearthly from rising beneath that gloomy canopy of cedars.

"Let us go on!" cried the Count, excited nearly to madness, and seizing the handle of his sword with iron grasp. "'Tis but a hound! Some miscreant hath loosened the dog from his leash, and he scents the footsteps of his late master, who had the habit of visiting the holy hermit that dwelt here of late——"

"Hush!" interrupted Lottchen, advancing hurriedly, and with a wild eye, from among the throng of females. "God is about to reveal his power for some great end! I know—I know—that footstep——"

She was fearfully interrupted, for while speaking, the hounds rushed out of the grove, in the swift, mad manner common to the animal, and made a rapid circuit around the form of the dazzled and giddy woman. In the next moment, a tottering wall gave way to the powerful leap of a human foot, and Lottchen lay senseless on the bosom of her son!

We draw a veil before the sudden fear, the general surprise, the tears, the delight, and the more regulated joy of the next hour.

At the end of that period, the scene had altogether changed. The chant was ended, the order of the procession was forgotten, and a burning curiosity had taken place of all sensations of superstitious dread. But the authority of Emich had driven the crowd back upon the common of the Teufelstein, where it was compelled to content itself, for the moment, with conjectures, and with tales of similar sudden changes from the incarnate to the carnate, that were reputed to have taken place in the eventful history of the borders of the Rhine.

The principal group of actors had retired a little within the cover of the cedars, where, favored by the walls and the trees, they remained unseen from without. Young Berchthold was seated on a fragment of fallen wall, supporting his still half-incredulous mother in his arms, a position which he had received the Count's peremptory, but kind orders to occupy. Meta was kneeling before Lottchen, whose hand she held in her own, though the bright eye and glowing face of the girl followed, with undisguised and ingenuous interest, every glance and movement of the

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countenance of the youth. The emotions of that hour were too powerful for concealment, and had there been any secret concerning her sentiments, surprise and the sudden burst of feeling that was its consequence, would have wrung it from her heart. Ulrike kneeled too, supporting the head of her friend, but smiling and happy. The Knight of Rhodes, the Abbé, Heinrich, and the smith, paced back and forth, as sentinels, to keep the curious at a distance, though occasionally stopping to catch sentences of the discourse. Emich leaned on his sword, rejoicing that his apprehensions were groundless, and we should do injustice to his rude but not ungenerous feelings, did we not say, glad to find that Berchthold was still in the flesh. When we add that the dogs played their frisky gambols around the crowd on the common, which could hardly yet believe in their earthly character, our picture is finished.

The deserving of this world may be divided into two great classes; the actively and the passively good. Ulrike belonged to the former, for though she felt as strongly as most others, an instinctive rectitude rarely failed to suggest some affirmative duty for every crisis that arrived. It was she then (and we here beg to tell the reader plainly, she is our heroine), that gave such a direction to the discourse as was most likely to explain what was unknown, without harassing anew feelings that had been so long and so sorely tried.

"And thou art now absolved from thy vow, Berchthold!" she asked, after one of those short interruptions, in which the exquisite happiness of such a meeting was best expressed by silent sympathy. "The Benedictines have no longer any claim to thy silence?"

"They set the return of the pilgrims as their own period, and, as I first learned the agreeable tidings by seeing you all in the procession, I had called in the hounds, who were scouring the chase, and was about to hurry down to present myself, when I met you all at the gateway of the camp. Our meeting would have taken place in the valley, but that duty required me first to visit the Herr Odo von Ritterstein——"

"The Herr von Ritterstein!" exclaimed Ulrike, turning pale.

"What of my ancient comrade, the Herr Odo, boy?" demanded Emich. "This is the first we have heard of him since the night the Abbey fell."

"I have told my tale badly," returned Berchthold, laughing and blushing, for he was neither too old nor too practical to blush, "since I have forgotten to name the Herr Odo."

"Thou told'st us of a companion," rejoined his mother, glancing a look at Ulrike, and raising herself from the support of her son, instinctively alive to her friend's embarrassment, "but thou called'st him merely a religious."

"I should have said the holy Hermit, whom all now know to be the Baron von Ritterstein. When obliged to fly from the falling roof, I met the Herr Odo kneeling before an altar, and recalling the form of one who had shown me much favor, it was he that I dragged with me to the crypt.—I surely spoke of our wounds and helplessness!"

"True; but without naming thy companion."

"It was the Herr Odo, Heaven be praised! When the monks found us, on the following day, unable to resist, and weakened with hunger and loss of blood, we were secretly removed together, as ye have heard, and cared for in a manner to restore us both, in good time, to our strength and to the use of our limbs. Why the Benedictines chose to keep us secret, I know not; but this silly tale of the supernatural huntsman, and of dogs loosened from their leash, would seem to prove that they had hopes of still working on the superstition of the country."

"Wilhelm of Venloo had naught to do with this!" exclaimed Emich, who had been musing deeply. "The underlings have continued the game after it was abandoned by their betters."

"This may be so, my good Lord; for I thought Father Bonifacius more than disposed to let us depart. But we were kept until the matters of the compensation and of the pilgrimage were settled. They found us easy abettors in their plot, if plot to work upon the fears of Duerckheim was in their policy; for when they pledged their faith that my two mothers and dearest Meta had been let into the secret of our safety, I felt

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no extraordinary haste to quit leeches so skilful, and so likely to make a speedy cure of our hurts."

"And did Bonifacius affirm this lie?"

"I say not the Abbot, my Lord Count, but most certainly the Brothers Cuno and Siegfried said all this and more—the malediction of a wronged son, and of a most foully treated mother——"

His mouth was stopped by the hand of Meta.

"We will forgive past sorrow for the present joy," murmured the weeping girl.

The angry and flushed brow of Berchthold grew more calm, and the discourse continued in a gentler strain.

Emich now walked away to join the Burgomaster, and together they endeavored to penetrate the motives which had led the monks to practise their deception. In the possession of so effectual a key, the solution of the problem was not difficult. The meeting of Bonifacius and the Count of Einsiedeln had been maturely planned, and the uncertain state of the public mind in the valley and town was encouraged as so much make-weight in the final settlement of the Convent's claims; for in that age, the men of the cloisters knew well how to turn every weakness of humanity to good purpose, so far as their own interests were concerned.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"'Tis over, and her lovely cheek is now
On her hard pillow."—Rogers.

On the following morning the Count of Hartenburg took horse at an early hour. His train, however, showed that the journey was to be short. But Monsieur Latouche, who mounted in company, wore the attire and furniture of a traveller. It was in truth the moment when Emich, having used this quasi churchman for his own ends, was about to dismiss him, with as much courtesy and grace as the circumstances seemed to require. Perhaps no picture of the different faces presented by a Church that had so long enjoyed an undisputed monopoly in Christendom, and which, as a consequence, betrayed so strong a tendency to abuses, would have been complete without some notice of such characters as the Knight of the Cross and the Abbé; and it was, moreover, our duty, as faithful chroniclers, to speak of things as they existed, although the accessories might not have a very capital connection with the interest of the principal subject. But here our slight relations with the Abbé are to cease altogether, his host having treated him, as many politic rulers treat others of his profession, purely as the instrument of his own views. Albrecht of Viederbach was prepared to accompany his boon associate as far as Manheim, but with the intention to return, the unsettled state of his order, and his consanguinity with the Count, rendering such a course both expedient and agreeable. Young Berchthold, too, was in the saddle, his lord having, by especial favor, commanded the forester to keep at his crupper.

The cavalcade ambled slowly down the Jaegerthal, the Count courteously endeavoring to show the departing Abbé, by a species of misty logic that appears to be the poetical atmosphere of diplomacy, that he was fully justified by circumstances for effecting all that had been done, and the latter acquiescing as readily in his conclusions as if he did not feel that he had been an egregious dupe.

"Thou wilt see this matter rightly represented among thy friends, Master Latouche," concluded the Baron—"should there be question of it, at the court of thy Francis:—whom may Heaven quickly restore to his longing people—the right valiant and loyal Prince and gentleman!"

"I will take upon myself, high-born and ingenuous Emich, to see thee fully justified, whenever there shall be discussion of thy great warfare and exquisite policy at the court of France. Nay—by the mass! should our jurists or our statesmen take upon themselves to prove to the world that thy house hath been wrong in this immortal enterprise, I pledge thee my faith to answer their reasons, both logically and politically, to their eternal shame and confusion."

As Monsieur Latouche uttered this promise with an unequivocal sneer, he thought himself fully avenged for the silly part he had been made to act in the Count's intrigues. At a later day he often told the tale, always concluding with a recital of this bold and ironical allusion to the petty history of the

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Jaegerthal, which not only he, but a certain portion of his listeners, seemed to think gave him altogether the best of the affair. Satisfied with his success, the Abbé pricked on, to repeat it to the knight, who laughed in his sleeve at his friend while he most extolled his wit, the two riding ahead in a manner to leave Emich an occasion to speak in confidence with his forester.

"Hast treated of this affair with Heinrich, as I bid thee, boy?" demanded the Count, in a manner between authority and affection, that he was much accustomed to use with Berchthold.

"I have, my Lord Count, and right pressingly, as my heart urged, but with little hope of benefit."

"How?—Doth the silly burgher still count upon his marks, after what hath passed? Didst tell him of the interest I take in the marriage, and of my intent to name thee to higher duties, in my villages?"

"None of these favors were forgotten, or aught else that a keen desire could suggest, or a willing memory recall."

"What answer had the burgher?"

Berchthold colored, hesitating to reply. It was only when Emich sternly repeated the question, that the truth was extorted from him; for naught but truth would one so loyal consent to use.

"He said, Herr Count, that if it was your pleasure to name a husband for his child, it should also be your pleasure to see that he was not a beggar. I do but give the words of the Herr Frey; for which liberty, I beg my lord to hold me free of all disrespect."

"The niggardly miser! These hounds of Duerckheim shall be made to know their master.—But be of cheer, boy; our tears and pilgrimages shall not be wasted, and thou shalt soon wive with a fairer and better, as becometh him I love."

"Nay, Herr Emich, I do beseech and implore——"

"Ha! Yon is the drivelling Heinrich seated on a rock of this ravine, like a vidette watching the marauders! Prick forward, Berchthold, and desire my noble friends to tarry at the Town-Hall making their compliments;—as for thee, thou mayest humor thy folly, and greet the smiling face of the pretty Meta the while."

The forester dashed ahead like an arrow; while the Count reined his own courser aside, turning into that ravine by which the path led to the Heidenmauer, when the ascent was made from the side of the valley. Emich was soon at the Burgomaster's side, having thrown his bridle to a servitor that followed.

"How is this, brother Heinrich?" he cried, displeasure disappearing in habitual policy and well-practised management—"art still bent on exorcism, or hast neglected some offices in yester's pilgrimage?"

"Praised be St. Benedict, or Brother Luther!—for I know not fairly to which the merit is most due—our Duerckheim is in a thrice happy disposition, as touching all witchcraft, and devilry, or even churchly miracles. This mystery of the hounds being so happily settled, the public mind seemeth to have taken a sudden change, and from sweating in broad daylight at the nestling of a mouse, or the hop of a cricket, our crones are ready to set demonology and Lucifer himself at defiance."

"The lucky clearing up of that difficulty will, in sooth, do much to favor the late Saxon opinions and may go near to set the monk of Wittenberg firmly upon his feet, in our country. Thou seest, Heinrich, that a dilemma so unriddled is worth a library of musty Latin maxims."

"That is it, Herr Emich, and the more especially as we are a reasoning town. Our minds once fairly enlightened, it is no easy matter to throw them into the shade again. It was seen how sorely the best of us were troubled with a couple of vagrant dogs so lately as yesterday, and now I much question if the whole of the gallant pack would so much as raise a doubt! We have had a lucky escape, Lord Count, for another day of uncertainty would have gone nigh to set up Limburg church again, and that without the masonry of the devil. There is naught so potent in an argument as a little apprehension of losses or of plagues thrown into the scale. Wisdom weighs light against profit or fear."

"It is well as it is, though Limburg roof will never again cover Limburg wall, friend Heinrich, while an Emich rules in Hartenburg and Duerckheim."—The Count saw the cloud on the Burgomaster's brow as

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he uttered the latter word, and slapping him familiarly on a shoulder, he added so quickly as to prevent reflection :—"But how now, Herr Frey ; why art at watch in this solitary ravine ?"

Heinrich was flattered by the noble's condescension, and not displeased to have a listener to his tale. First looking about him to see that no one could overhear their discourse, he answered on a lower key, in the manner in which communications that need confidence are usually made.

"You know, Herr Emich, this weakness of Ulrike, concerning hermitages and monks, altars and saints' days, with all those other practices of which we may now reasonably expect to be quit, since late rumors speak marvels of Luther's success. Well, the good woman would have a wish to come upon the Heidenmauer this morning, and as there had been some warm argument between us, and the poor wife had wept much concerning marrying our child with young Berchthold, a measure out of all prudence and reason, as you must see, nobly-born Count, I was fain willing to escort her thus far, that she might give vent to her sorrow in godly discourse with the hermit."

"And Ulrike is above, in the cedars, with the Anchorite ?"

"As sure as I am here waiting her return, Lord Count."

"Thou art a gallant husband, Master Frey !—Wert wont of old to resort much with the Herr Odo von Ritterstein—he who playeth this masquerade of penitence and seclusion ?"

"Sapperment !—I never could endure the arrogant ! But Ulrike fancieth he hath qualities that are not so evil, and a woman's taste, like a child's humors, is easiest altered by giving it scope."

Emich laid both hands on the shoulders of his companion, looking him full and earnestly in the face. The glances that were exchanged in this attitude were pregnant with meaning. That of the Count expressed the distrust, the contempt, and the wonder of a man of loose life, while that of the Burgomaster, by appearing to reflect the character of the woman who had so long been his wife, expressed volumes in her favor. No language could have said more for Ulrike's principles and purity, than the simple, hearty, and unalterable confidence of the man who necessarily had so many opportunities of knowing her. Neither spoke, until the Count, releasing his grasp, walked slowly up the mountain, saying in a voice which proved how strongly he felt—

"I would thy consort had been noble, Heinrich !"

"Nay, my good lord," answered the Burgomaster, "the wish were scarcely kind to a friend ! In that case, I could not have wived the Frau."

"Tell me, good Heinrich—for I never heard the history of thy love—wert thou and thy proposal well received, when first offered to the virgin heart of Herr Haitzinger's daughter ?"

The Burgomaster was not displeased with an opportunity of alluding to a success that had made him the envy of his equals.

"The end must speak for the means, Herr Count," he answered chuckling. "Ulrike is none of your free and froward spirits to jump out of a window, or to meet a youth more than half-way, but such encouragement as becometh maiden diffidence was not wanting, or mine own ill opinion of myself might have kept me a bachelor to this hour."

Emich chafed to hear such language coming from one he so little respected, and applied to one he had really loved. The effort to swallow his spleen produced a short silence, of which we shall avail ourselves to transfer this scene to the hut of the hermit, where there was an interview that proved decisive of the future fortunes of several of the characters of our tale.

The day which succeeded the restoration of Berchthold had been one of general joy and felicitation in Duerckheim. There was an end to the doubts of the timid and superstitious, concerning an especial and an angry visitation from Heaven, as a merited punishment for overturning the altars of the Abbey, and few were so destitute of good feeling not to sympathize in the happiness of those who had so bitterly mourned the fancied death of the forester. As is usual in cases of violent transitions, the reaction helped to lessen the influence of the monks, and even those most inclined to doubt were now encouraged to hope that the religious change, which was so

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fast gaining ground, might not produce all the horrors that had been dreaded.

Heinrich has revealed the nature of the discussion that took place between himself and his wife. The latter had endeavored in vain to seize the favorable moment to work upon the feelings of the Burgomaster, in the interests of the lovers; but though sincerely glad that a youth who had shown such mettle in danger was not the victim of his courage, Heinrich was not of a temperament to let any admiration of generous deeds affect the settled policy of a whole life. It was at the close of this useless and painful conference, that the mother suddenly demanded permission of her husband to visit the hermit, who had been left, as before the recent events, in undisturbed possession of the dreaded Heidenmauer.

Any other than a man constituted like Heinrich might, at such a moment, have heard this request with distrust. But strong in his opinion of himself, and accustomed to confide in his wife, the obstinate Burgomaster hailed the application as a means of relieving him from a discussion, in which, while he scarce knew how plausibly to defend his opinion, he was resolutely determined not to yield. The manner in which he volunteered to accompany his wife, and in which he remained patiently awaiting her return, and the commencement of his dialogue with Emich are known. With this short explanation, we shall shift the scene to the hut of the Anchorite.

Odo of Ritterstein was pale with loss of blood from the wounds received from a fragment of the falling roof, but paler still by the force of that inward fire which consumed him. The features of his fair and gentle companion were not bright, as usual, though naught could rob Ulrike of that winning beauty which owed so much of its charm to expression. Both appeared agitated with what had already passed between them, and perhaps still more by those feelings, which each had struggled to conceal.

"Thou hast indeed had many moving passages in thy life, Odo," said the gentle Ulrike, who was seemingly listening to some recital from the other's lips; "and this last miraculous escape from death is among the most wonderful."

"That I should have perished beneath the roof of Limburg, on the anniversary of my crime, and with the fall of those altars I violated, would have been so just a manifestation of Heaven's displeasure, Ulrike, that even now I can scarce believe I am permitted to live! Thou then thought in common with others, that I had been released from this life of woe?"

"Thou lookest with an unthankful eye at what thou hast of hope and favor, or thou wouldst not use a term so ungrateful in speaking of thy sorrows. Remember, Odo, that our joys, in this being, are tainted with mortality, and that thy unhappiness does not surpass that of thousands who still struggle with their duties."

"This is the difference between the unquiet ocean and tranquil waters—between the oak and the reed! The current of thy calm existence may be ruffled by the casual interruption of some trifling obstacle, but the gentle surface soon subsides, leaving the element limpid and without stain! Thy course is that of the flowing and pure spring, while mine is the torrent's mad and turbulent leaps. Thou hast indeed well said, Ulrike, God did not form us for each other!"

"Whatever nature may have done towards suiting our dispositions and desires, Odo, Providence and the world's usages have interposed to defeat."

The hermit gazed at the mild speaker with eyes so fixed and dazzling, that she bowed her own look to the earth.

"No," he murmured rapidly, "Heaven and earth have different destinies—the lion and the lamb different instincts!"

"Nay, I will none of this disreputable depreciation of thyself, poor Odo. That thou hast been erring, we shall not deny—for who is without reproach?—but that thou meritest these harsh epithets, none but thyself would venture to affirm."

"I have met with many enigmas, Ulrike, in an eventful and busy life—I have seen those who worked both good and evil—encountered those who have defeated their own ends by their own wayward means—but never have I known one so devoted to the right, that seemed so disposed to extenuate the sinner's faults!"

"Then hast thou never met a true lover of

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God or known a Christian. It matters not, Odo, whether we admit of this or that form of faith—the fruit of the right tree is charity and self-abasement, and these teach us to think humbly of ourselves and kindly of others."

"Thou beganst early to practise these golden rules, or surely thou never wouldst have forgotten thine own excellence, or have been ready to sacrifice it to the heedless impulses of one so reckless as him to whom thou wast betrothed!

The eye of Ulrike grew brighter, but it was merely because a tinge of color diffused itself on her features.

"I know not for what good purpose, Herr von Ritterstein," she said, "that these allusions are now made. You know that I have come to make a last effort to secure the peace of Meta. Berchthold spoke to me of your intention to reward the service he did your life, and I have now to say, that if in aught you can do the youth favor, the moment when it will be most acceptable hath come—for Lottchen has been too sorely stricken to bear up long against further grief."

The hermit was reproved. He turned slowly to one of his receptacles of worldly stores, and drew forth a packet. The rattling told his companion that it was of parchment, and she waited the result with curious interest.

"I will scarce say, Ulrike," he replied, "that this deed is the price of a life that is scarce worth the gift. Early in my acquaintance with young Berchthold and Meta, I wrung their secret from them; and from that moment it hath been my greatest pleasure to devise means to secure the happiness of one so dear to thee. I found in the child the simple, ingenuous faith which was so admirable in the mother, and shall I say that reverence for the latter quickened the desire to serve her offspring?"

"I certainly owe thee thanks, Herr von Ritterstein, for the constancy of this good opinion," returned Ulrike, showing sensibility.

"Thank me not, but rather deem the desire to serve thy child a tribute that repentant error gladly pays to virtue. Thou knowest that I am the last of my race, and there remained naught but to endow some religious house, to let my estate and gold pass to the feudal prince, or to do this."

"I could not have thought it easy to effect this change, in opposition to the Elector's interests!"

"Those have been looked to; a present fine has smoothed the way, and these parchments contain all that is necessary to install young Berchthold as my substitute and heir."

"Friend!—dear, generous friend!" exclaimed the mother, moved to tears, for, at that moment, Ulrike saw nothing but the future happiness of her child assured, and Berchthold restored to more than his former hopes—"generous and noble Odo!"

The hermit arose, and placed the parchments in her hand, in the manner of one long prepared to perform the act.

"And now, Ulrike," he said with a forced calm, "this solemn and imperative duty done, there remaineth but the last leave-taking."

"Leave-taking!—Thou wilt live with Meta and Berchthold,—the castle of Ritterstein will be thy resting-place, after so much sorrow and suffering!"

"This may not be—my vow—my duties—Ulrike, I fear my prudence forbids."

"Thy prudence!—Thou art no longer young, dear Odo, privations thou hast hitherto despised will overload thy increasing years, and we shall not be happy with the knowledge that thou art suffering for the very conveniences which thine own liberality hath conferred on others."

"Habit hath taken nature's place, and the hermitage and the camp are no longer strangers to me. If thou wouldst secure not only my peace, but my salvation, Ulrike, let me depart. I have already lingered too long near a scene which is filled with recollections that prove dread enemies to the penitent."

Ulrike recoiled, and her cheek blanched to paleness. Every limb trembled, for that quick sympathy, which neither time nor duty had entirely extinguished, silently admonished her of his meaning. There was a fervor in his voice, too, that thrilled on her ear like tones which, spite of all her care, the truant imagination would sometimes recall; for, in no subsequent condition of life, can a woman entirely forget the long-

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cherished sounds with which true love first greets the maiden ear.

"Odo," said a voice so gentle that it caused the heart of the Anchorite to beat, "when dost thou think to depart?"

"This day—this hour—this minute."

"I believe—yes—thou art right to go!"

"Ulrike, God will keep thee in mind. Pray often for me."

"Farewell, dear Odo."

"God bless thee—may He have mercy on me!"

There was then a short pause. The hermit approached and lifted his hands in the attitude of benediction; twice he seemed about to clasp the unresisting Ulrike to his bosom, but her meek, tearful countenance repressed the act, and, muttering a prayer, he rushed from the hut. Left to herself, Ulrike sank on a stool, and remained like an image of woe, tears flowing in streams down her cheeks.

Some minutes elapsed before the wife of Heinrich Frey was aroused from her forgetfulness. Then the approach of footsteps told her that she was no longer alone. For the first time in her life, Ulrike endeavored to conceal her emotion with a sentiment of shame; but ere this could be effected, the Count and Heinrich entered.

"What hast done with poor Odo von Ritterstein, good Frau; that man of sin and sorrow?" demanded the latter, in his hearty, unsuspecting manner.

"He has left us, Heinrich."

"For his castle!—well, the man hath had his share of sorrow, and ease may not yet come too late. The life of Odo, Lord Count, hath not been, like our own histories, of a nature to make him content. Had that affair of the Host, though at the best but an irreverent and unwarrantable act, happened in these days, less might have been thought of it; and then" (tapping his wife's cheek), "to lose Ulrike's favor was no slight calamity of itself.—But what have we here?"

"'Tis a deed, by which the Herr von Ritterstein invests Berchthold with his worldly effects."

The Burgomaster hastily unfolded the ample parchment. At a glance, though unable to comprehend the Latin of the instrument, his accustomed eye saw that all the usual appliances were there. Turning suddenly to Emich, for he was not slow to comprehend the cause of the gift, he exclaimed—

"Here is manna in the wilderness! Our differences are all happily settled, nobly-born Count, and next to according the hand of Meta to the owner of the lands of Ritterstein, I hold it a pleasure to oblige an illustrious friend and patron. Henceforth, Herr Emich, let there be nought but fair words between us."

Since entering the hut, the Count had not spoken. His look had studied the tearful eyes, and colorless cheeks of Ulrike, and he put his own constructions on the scene. Still he did the fair wife of the burgher justice, for, though less credulous than Heinrich on the subject of his consort's affections, he too well knew the spotless character of her mind, to change the opinion her virtue had extorted from him, in early youth. He accepted the conditions of his friend, with as much apparent frankness as they were offered, and, after a few short explanations, the whole party left the Heidenmauer together.

Our task is ended. On the following day Berchthold and Meta were united. The Castle and the Town vied with each other in doing honor to the nuptials, and Ulrike and Lottchen endeavored to forget their own permanent causes of sorrow in the happiness of their children.

In due time Berchthold took possession of his lands, removing with his bride and mother to the Castle of Ritterstein, which he always affected to hold merely as the trustee of its absent owner. Gottlob was promoted in his service, and having succeeded in persuading Gisela to forget the gay cavalier who had frequented Hartenburg, these two wayward spirits settled down into a half-loving, half-wrangling couple, for the rest of their lives.

Duerckheim, as is commonly the case with the secondary actors in most great changes, shared the fate of the frogs in the fable; it got rid of the Benedictines for a new master, and though the Burgomaster and Dietrich, in after-life, had many wise discourses concerning the nature of the revolution of Limburg, as the first affected to call the destruc-

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tion of the Abbey, he never could very clearly explain to the understanding of the latter, the great principles of its merits. Still the smith was not the less an admirer of the Count, and to this day his descendants show the figure of a marble cherub, as a trophy brought away by their ancestor on that occasion.

Bonifacius and his monks found shelter in other convents, each endeavoring to lessen the blow, by such expedients as best suited his tastes and character. The pious Arnolph persevered to the end, and, believing charity to be the fairest attribute of the Christian, he never ceased to pray for the enemies of the Church, or to toil that they might have the benefit of his intercession.

As for Odo Von Ritterstein, the country was long moved by different tales of his fate. One rumor—and it had much currency—said he was serving in company with Albrecht of Veiderbach, who rejoined his brother knights, and that he died on the sands of Africa. But there is another tradition extant in the Jaegerthal, touching his end. It is said, that, thirty years later, after Heinrich, and Emich of Leinengen, and most of the other actors of this legend, had been called to their great accounts, an aged wanderer came to the gate of Ritterstein, demanding shelter for the night. He is reported to have been well received by Meta, her husband and son being then absent in the wars, and to have greatly interested his hostess by the histories he gave of customs and events in distant regions. Pleased with her guest, the Madame Von Ritterstein (for Berchthold had purchased this appellation by his courage) urged him to rest himself another day within her walls. From communicating, the stranger began to inquire; and he so knew how to put his questions, that he soon obtained the history of the family. Ulrike was the last he named; and the younger female inmates of the castle fancied that his manner changed as he listened to the account of the close of her life, and of her peaceful and pious end. The stranger departed that very day, nor would his visit probably have been remembered, had not his body been shortly after found in the hut of the Heidenmauer, stiffened by death. Those who love to throw a coloring of romance over the affections, are fond of believing this was the hermit, who had found a secret satisfaction, even at the close of so long a life, in breathing his last on the spot where he had finally separated from the woman he had so long and fruitlessly loved.

To this tradition—true or false—we attach no importance. Our object has been to show, by a rapidly-traced picture of life, the reluctant manner in which the mind of man abandons old, to receive new impressions—the inconsistencies between profession and practice—the error in confounding the good with the bad, in any sect or persuasion—the common and governing principles that control the selfish, under every shade and degree of existence—and the high and immutable qualities of the good, the virtuous and of the really noble.

THE END.

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